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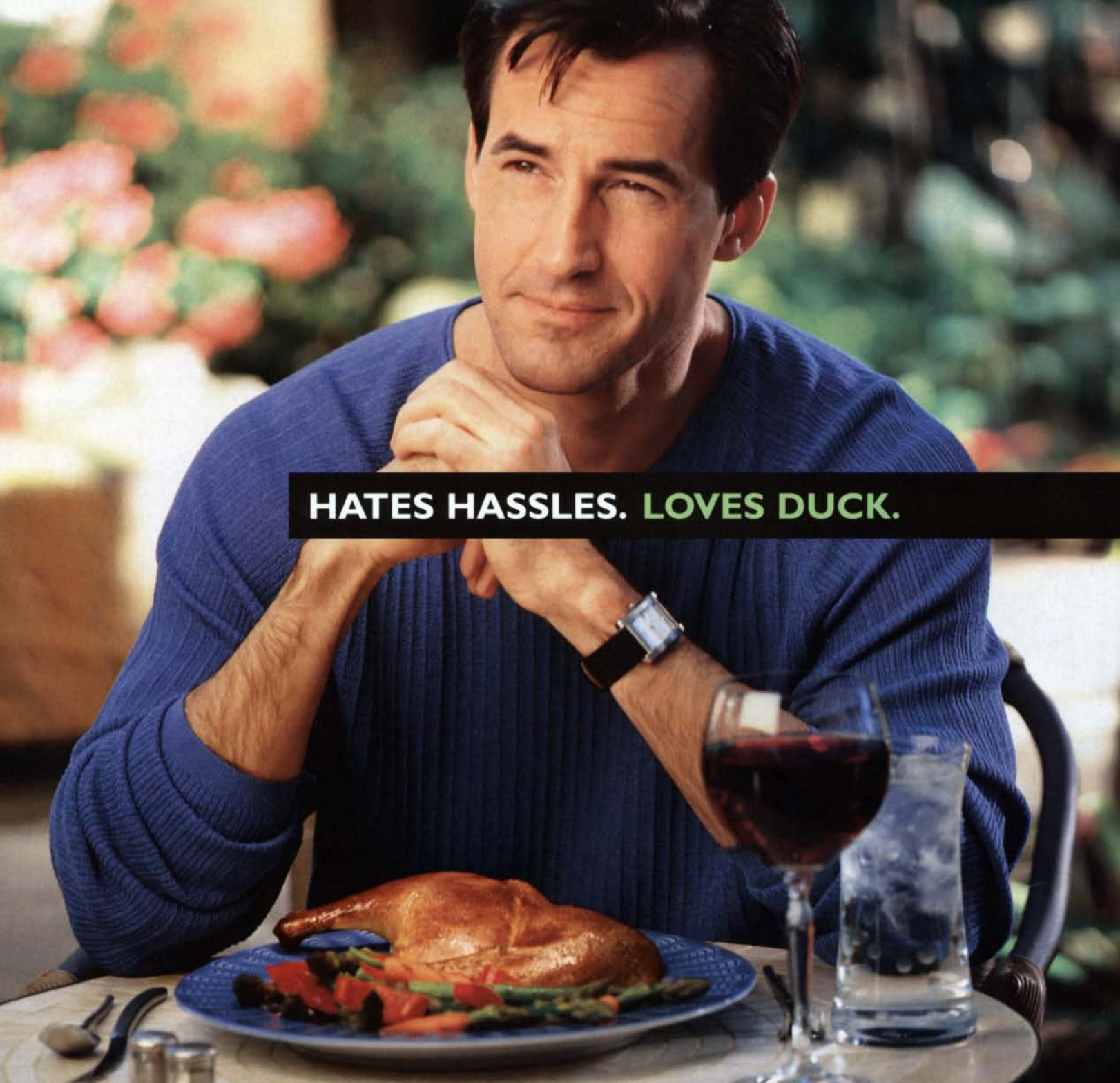


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Artisan Foods

Organic smoke-dried tomatoes



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- ◆ Quick (under 45 minutes)
- ◆ Make ahead
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READER SERVICE NO. 96

Creating a menu is fun, but it can often be exasperating, too, especially if you're not familiar with the recipes. To help you make delicious plans for summer entertaining, we've put together five menus (in addition to the Satay Menu on p. 56) from the recipes in this issue.

Easy Vegetarian

Green Salad with Black Olive & Mint Vinaigrette p. 38

Pasta with Tomatoes, Gorgonzola & Basil p. 16

Vanilla Ice Cream with Raspberry Sauce p. 67

A delicious no-cook pasta sauce makes this menu fast. Toss a salad of hearty greens like radicchio, chicory, and romaine with the olive vinaigrette (loosen the dressing a bit by adding a little more olive oil).

On the Lighter Side

Puréed Summer Squash Soup with Raita p. 52

Pork Loin Chops with a Sage & Fennel Crust p. 63

Summer Succotash p. 41

Raspberry-Lemon Granité p. 69

A refreshing no-fat dessert winds up this lighter-feeling menu. Start with the silky soup (use low-fat yogurt in the raita if you like) and grill the pork chops instead of sautéing them (use the grilling method for the lamb chops on the same page).

Special Occasion

Puréed Eggplant Soup with Tomato Relish p. 53

Corn Soufflé Puddings p. 42

Beef Tenderloin Medallions with a Rosemary & Thyme Crust p. 62

Chocolate-Raspberry Tart with a Gingersnap Crust p. 66

Many of the dishes for this elegant dinner can be made ahead. All you'll have to do is heat the soup and sauté the beef. Serve the beef on a bed of lightly dressed arugula with the corn soufflés on the side.

Quick but Impressive

Savory Shrimp Fajitas p. 86B

Corn & Avocado Relish p. 39

Grilled Peaches with Pound Cake & Ginger Crème Fraîche p. 86B

If weekend guests are showing up on short notice, serve these shrimp fajitas, with or without a little corn-avocado relish on the side. Fresh peaches and store-bought pound cake turn into a satisfying dessert from the grill (or from the grill pan).

Labor Day Barbecue

Brined & Grilled Chicken with Chipotle-Lime Rub p. 37

Cucumber-Grape Salsa p. 38

Grilled Eggplant & Plum Tomatoes with Basil p. 86B

Bread Salad with Corn, Cherry Tomatoes & Basil p. 43

— OR —

Potato, Corn & Tomato Salad p. 47

Peppermint Brownies p. 49

You can't go wrong with everyone's favorite—grilled chicken—and some knock-your-socks-off peppermint brownies.

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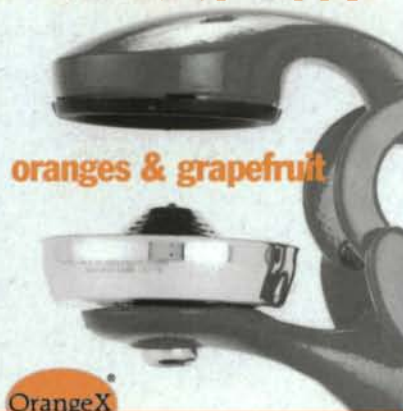


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READER SERVICE NO. 58

from the editor

BLUEBERRIES IN MAY? ARE YOU CRAZY?

I was cruising through our great online forum the other day (www.forums.taunton.com/tp-cookstalk) and saw a discussion about the seasonal appropriateness of our recipes or, to be more accurate, the seeming lack of appropriateness. The comments ranged from (and I paraphrase) "It's May—why aren't we talking about asparagus and rhubarb in the July issue I just got?" to "I live in the South—rhubarb and asparagus are so over" to "Doesn't *Fine Cooking* believe in eating in season?"

The last comment prompts me to explain a few things about when we run recipes that feature fresh produce. First, an issue labeled "July" on the front is really the June/July issue, which most subscribers receive in mid-May. We print only the second month on the front so that the guys who handle the newsstands will leave the issue on sale for the full term—purely pragmatic.

And that leads to my second point: we are a bimonthly magazine, and we figure that most people will be cooking from the magazine for the full two months, so we try to anticipate what's coming into season over that whole period (in our April/May issue, we *did* feature asparagus). I admit that it's tricky to address the many climates that our readers live in.

Most important is that, at *Fine Cooking*, we *do* try to champion eating fresh seasonal produce—locally grown and organic, if possible. Obviously, this isn't always practical (there aren't a lot of citrus groves in New England). But fresh seasonal vegetables and fruit taste better, and they haven't had to travel halfway around the world. Plus we think it's just more fun to celebrate the seasonal changes by cooking with what's just come out of the ground of our nearby gardens and farms.

—Martha Holmberg, editor in chief

P. S. Check out our new "Menus" section on p. 8.

Enjoying cilantro in more ways than one

Love the new format! A few comments on a favorite herb:

If you can get the usual kind of coriander (cilantro) with the roots still attached, the roots alone can be used while cooking

to infuse the basic flavor without overdoing it, and then the leaves can be used for the "kick" at the end. Tie the roots together and then fish them out before the end. Works well for chile verde.

Another interesting point is that there are at least two other



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depending upon the hours worked and the number of clients", says Titcomb. Since most clients work full-time, Titcomb goes into their home and cooks 10 meals for the whole family. Her service includes grocery shopping, preparation, cooking, packaging and cleanup. With a cost as low as \$10 per meal, per person, Titcomb always has a long waiting list. So what does it take to become a personal chef? "Organization, persistence, a love of cooking and a little know how," says Titcomb. *For more information, call the United States Personal Chef Association at 1-800-995-2138 or go to <http://www.uspca.com>. Training and resources available for all experience levels.*

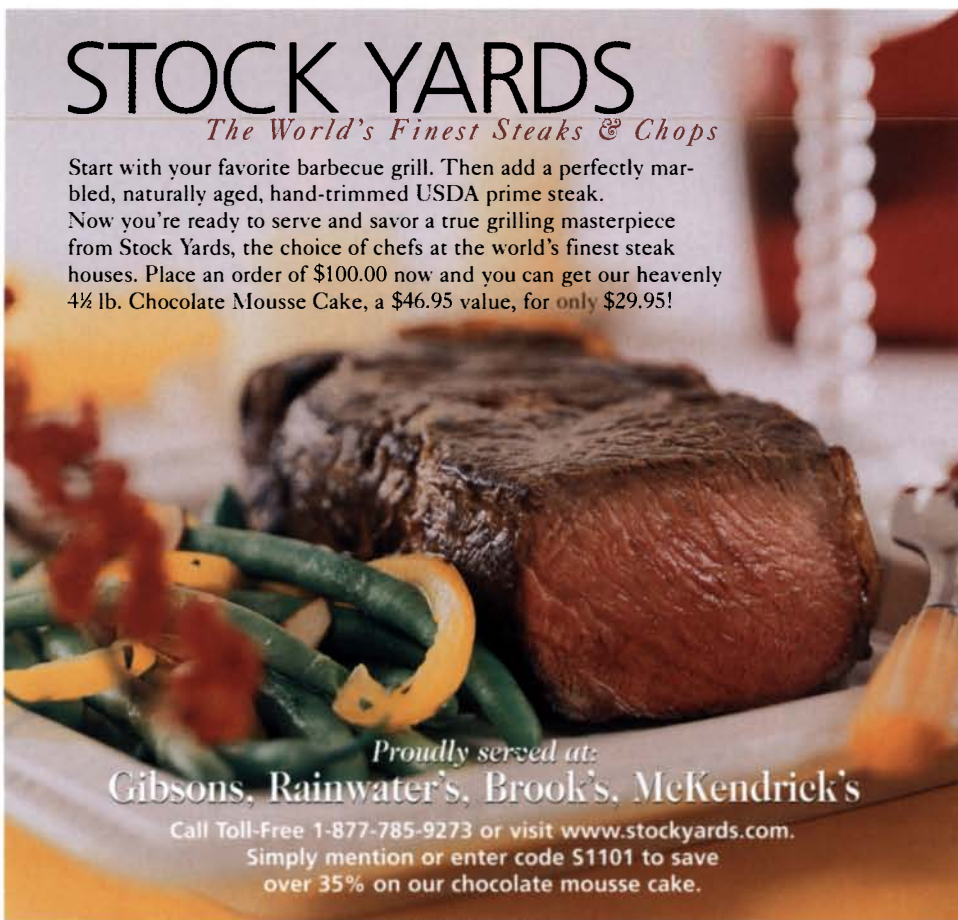
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types of coriander that bear little or no resemblance to the standard one, but taste the same. An amazing nursery outside of Toronto has a dazzling array of culinary and other herbs. The first is Vietnamese coriander, with reasonably large nonsegmented leaves on a plant that looks somewhat like sage. These can be picked one at a time and used, so it is very convenient.

The second is the really fascinating one, called, I believe, Mexican coriander. It is a low-growing, spiky plant that looks like a succulent or a Christmas cactus. It seems to bear no relation to the other two, but it has the characteristic flavor and smell.

I always try to grow all three varieties, and then try to see if I can detect the nuances of each.

—Warren Jackson,
Mississauga, Ontario

More toffee tips

I wanted to pass along a tip regarding the “toffee” portion of Maryellen Driscoll’s Banoffee recipe in *Fine Cooking* #50 (p. 55). I found that the addition of one to two teaspoons of milk each time I stirred the cooking caramel (about two tablespoons in all) helped smooth out the texture. Adding two teaspoons of whole butter, ½ teaspoon of vanilla extract (or coffee liqueur), and about 1 teaspoon instant coffee granules to the finished caramel deepened the flavor and cut the sweetness.

—Maral Apelian Banks,
pastry chef, via e-mail

Garlic + potatoes = satisfaction

Going through *Fine Cooking* #49, I came upon the recipe for slow-roasting garlic (p. 64). It looks delicious, but I was disappointed that there wasn’t a complete recipe for garlic mashed potatoes. You just said to whip the

garlic with potatoes, cream, and seasoning. I would really like to know how much garlic, potatoes, cream and seasoning to use. Is it possible to get a recipe?

—Kay Fonti, via e-mail

Editors’ reply: Here’s a nice rendition of garlic mashed potatoes that I taught in a class recently, using the oil-cooked garlic from *Fine Cooking* #49. You can make it richer or lighter depending on which liquid you choose. Enjoy!

Mashed Potatoes with Slow-Cooked Garlic & Olive Oil

Serves four to six.

2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch cubes
2 tablespoons kosher salt; more for seasoning
6 to 10 cloves slow-cooked garlic (from *Fine Cooking* #49, p. 64), or roasted garlic
¼ cup oil from slow-cooking the garlic, or plain extra-virgin olive oil
½ cup half-and-half, milk, or reserved potato cooking liquid; more as needed
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Put a large pot of water on high heat. Add the potatoes and salt and bring to a boil. Boil just until a skewer or knife can very easily penetrate the center of the potatoes, 20 to 30 minutes.

When the potatoes are done, draw off about 1 cup of the cooking liquid; set aside. Drain the potatoes and return them to the pot in which they were cooked. Add the garlic cloves and mash them with a potato masher. With a wooden spoon, work in the half-and-half, milk, or reserved cooking liquid until you reach the consistency you like and then stir in the olive oil. Season generously with salt and several grinds of black pepper.

Just before serving, check the consistency of the potatoes and add a little more liquid if they need loosening. Taste and adjust the seasonings. ♦

^{fine}Cooking ...around the country

July 22: Senior editor Amy Albert talks about *Fine Cooking*’s August/September issue on “The Cooking Couple” radio program at 10:18 a.m., stations WPLM 1390 AM and WBNW 1120 AM in the Boston area.

Fine Cooking’s culinary ambassador Jennifer Bushman fires up the grill for a series of cooking classes and demonstrations based on *Fine Cooking* recipes: **July 23**, at Caprial and John’s Kitchen, **Portland, Oregon**, she conducts a hands-on class featuring a complete menu cooked on the grill. 503-233-4382.

July 25, Jennifer conducts a class at the Badger Mountain Vineyard in **Kennewick, Washington**. 509-627-4986.

August 7, Jennifer makes appetizers on the grill at the Cook Street School of Fine Cooking, **Denver**. 303-308-9300.

August 20-24, she teaches classes at Dierberg stores in **Missouri** at Creve Coeur, 314-432-6505; **St. Peters**, 636-970-3520; **Ellisville**, 636-394-9504; and **St. Louis**, 314-849-3698.

September 21 she teaches two hands-on classes at Ramekins **Sonoma Valley Culinary School**, in California, 707-933-0450.

September 23-25: Editor-in-chief Martha Holmberg teaches classes at Central Market Cooking Schools in **Dallas, Fort Worth**, and **Plano, Texas**. Call the stores for details.

Plus: In the **Seattle** area, contributing editor Abby Dodge can be heard frequently on Brian Poor’s “Poor Man’s Kitchen” on KOMO radio. In the **Southwest**, tune into Jennifer Bushman’s “Nothing to It” television program to see demonstrations of recipes from the pages of *Fine Cooking*. The show airs on selected NBC and Fox stations in **Nevada, Arizona, Wyoming, Montana**, and **Idaho**. Check local listings for times.

Here’s the place to share your thoughts on our recent articles or your food and cooking philosophies. Send your comments to Letters, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by e-mail to fc@taunton.com.

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READER SERVICE NO. 8

MOLLY STEVENS, a *Fine Cooking* contributing editor ("Grilled Chicken," p. 34," "Potato Salads," p. 44), is the co-author of *One Potato, Two Potato* and the co-editor of *Best American Recipes*. She's now writing a book on braising, as well as researching the history of New England food for the Oxford University Press's *Encyclopedia of American Food*. Molly also teaches cooking classes across the country.

TASHA PRYSI ("Corn," p. 39) grew up eating plenty of fresh corn as a dairyman's daughter from the central valley of California. She cooked at Chez Panisse Restaurant & Café in Berkeley for five years and contributed to the *Chez Panisse Café Cookbook* and *Chez Panisse Fruit*. Tasha now works as a cooking teacher and freelance food writer.

DAVID PAGE and **BARBARA SHINN** ("Potato Salads," p. 44) are the owners of the acclaimed New York City restaurant Home and the authors of *Recipes from Home*, which won a 2002 IACP award. David and Barbara also tend their own vineyard on Long Island's North Fork.

SAM HAYWARD ("Potato Salads" p. 44) serves up plenty of Maine potatoes as chef-owner at Fore Street Restaurant in Portland, keeping in line with his insistence on using the freshest local ingredients. Sam was recently nominated for the James Beard award for the best chef in the Northeast.

GREG CASE ("Peppermint Brownies," p. 48) was a pastry chef at Dean & DeLuca in New York City and Hammersley's

SU-MEI YU ("Satay Menu," p. 56) is the chef-owner of Saffron restaurant in San Diego, California. She's the author of *Cracking the Coconut: Classic Thai Home Cooking*, which won the IACP/Julia Child award for best first-time author. Her next book, *Asian Grilling*, is just out this summer from Harper Collins. Born of Chinese parents in Thailand, Su-Mei returns to her homeland annually to collect recipes for traditional, authentic Thai food.

Bistro in Boston before setting out on his own. He opened the G. Case Baking Company in Somerville, Massachusetts, where he supplies area restaurants and coffee houses with delectable biscotti, cakes, cookies, and bars.

EVE FELDER ("Velvety Soups," p. 50) is associate dean for advanced cooking at The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. Before coming to the CIA in 1994, she was a chef at Chez Panisse Café in Berkeley, California. Eve lives in the Hudson Valley, where she raises honeybees and tends a 1,000-square-foot vegetable and herb garden.

FRED THOMPSON ("Perfect Iced Tea," p. 54), a lifelong iced tea devotee, diligently brews a fresh pitcher every other day in the summer months. Fred writes the "Weekend Gourmet" column for the *News and Observer* in

Raleigh, North Carolina, and is the author of *Iced Tea* and *Lemonade*.

JERRY TRAUNFELD ("Herb Crusts," p. 61) worked at two San Francisco restaurants, Ernie's and Stars, and was the executive chef at the Alexis Hotel in Seattle before becoming the executive chef at The Herbfarm Restaurant in 1990. He's the author of *The Herbfarm Cookbook*, and in 2000, he won the James Beard award for best chef in the Northwest and Hawaii.

MICHELLE POLZINE leapt at the chance to rhapsodize about her favorite summer fruit ("Raspberries," p. 64) and to create recipes in which they star. She was the pastry chef at the acclaimed Elaine's on Franklin in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and now works as a pastry chef in San Francisco.



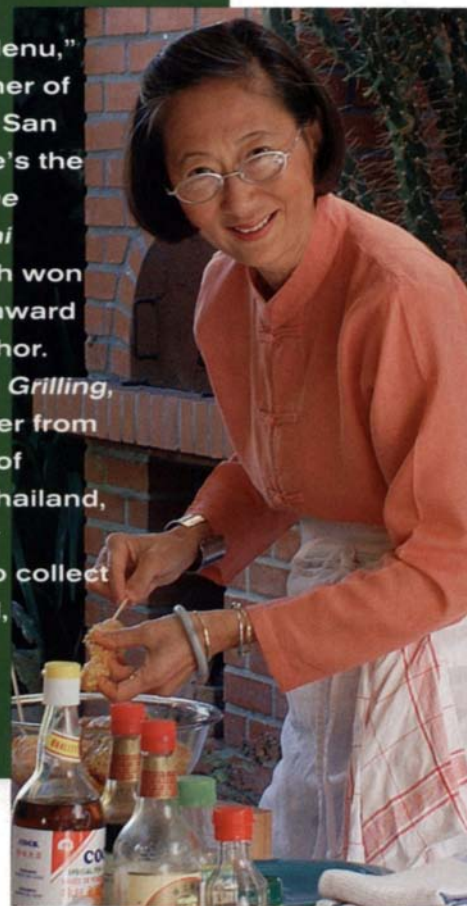
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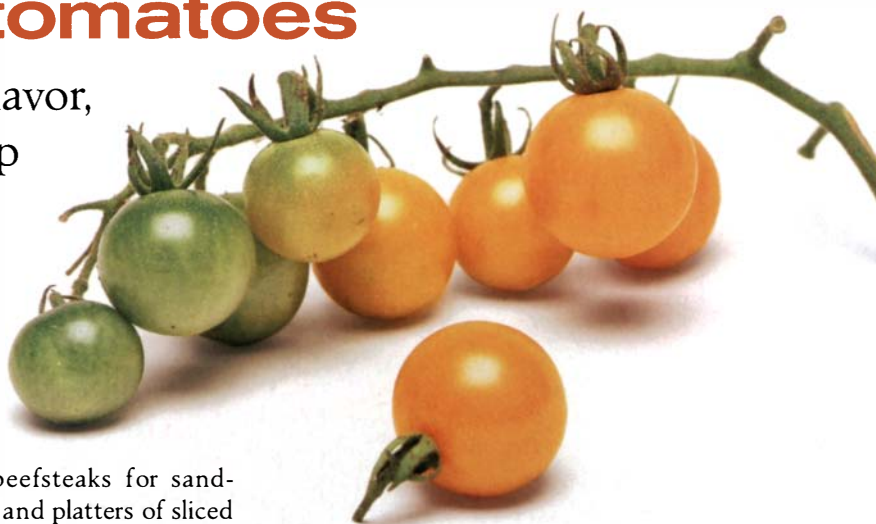
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READER SERVICE NO. 111

Juicy, ripe tomatoes

For the best tomato flavor, grow your own or shop at a farmstand

BY RUTH LIVELY



The flavor of a juicy, ripe tomato still warm from the sun is the essence of summer. And the chances of capturing that true vine-ripened flavor are always better the closer to your kitchen a tomato is grown. But if you can't grow your own, you're not out of luck; you can find home-grown quality at farmstands and farmers' markets in your area. Just don't expect to get it at the grocery store, where the varieties you'll find have been bred for the long haul, with qualities like thick skin and uniform shape often winning out over good flavor.

I find three types of tomato indispensable: beefsteaks, slicers, and cherries. I love big,

juicy beefsteaks for sandwiches and platters of sliced tomatoes. My favorites: the fabulous 'Brandywine,' a large, lumpy, pinkish-red heirloom, and the hybrid 'Big Beef,' for its generous yield and great flavor, thanks to a good balance of sugars and acids. When a big, fat beefsteak is just too much tomato, I go for a midsize slicing tomato like 'Carmello' or 'Dona.' And for snacking, salads, garnishes, and grilling, my favorite cherry tomatoes are 'Sweet Chelsea,' a (relatively) large red, and 'Sungold,' a deep orange cherry with very sweet flavor. (For where to buy seeds, see p. 80; to save seeds, see p. 72.)

(Continued)

Pasta with Tomatoes, Gorgonzola & Basil

Serves four to six as a main dish.

This recipe can be varied by adding slivered scallions, minced garlic, torn arugula leaves, chopped parsley, a few chopped sun-dried tomatoes, or other pantry ingredients, so consider it a jumping-off point. I use dolce-latte gorgonzola when I can find it because I prefer its creamier texture and mellower flavor in this dish.

Kosher salt

2 large beefsteak or 4 medium slicing tomatoes (about 1¾ pounds total)

About ½ pound gorgonzola, crumbled

Freshly ground black pepper

Several large sprigs fresh basil

1 pound dried linguine

½ cup toasted pine nuts

Put a large pot of salted water on to boil.

Core the tomatoes, cut them into medium

dice, and put them and their juices into a large serving bowl (you should have about 4 cups). Add the gorgonzola, a little salt, and a generous grinding of black pepper. Tear the basil into small pieces and add them to the bowl. Cook the pasta in the boiling water, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 10 minutes. When the pasta is done, drain it and immediately add it to the bowl. Toss well until almost all of the cheese is melted and the pasta is evenly coated with cheese and tomato juices. Add the pine nuts and serve on warmed plates.

Basil and tomatoes were made for each other, but arugula, chives, cilantro, dill, fennel, lovage, savory, sorrel, and watercress are wonderful complements, too.



Photos: Scott Phillips

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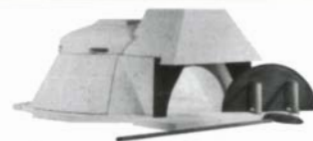
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READER SERVICE NO. 51



Tricks for tomatoes

PEELING: I usually don't bother to peel tomatoes, but if I must, this is the method I prefer: Stick a fork into the stem end and rotate the tomato over the flame on a gas stove briefly, until the skin begins to split. When it's cool enough to handle, you can peel the skin off easily.

GRATING: If you need tomato pulp without the skin, try this: Cut the fruit in half horizontally and grate its flesh on the large holes of a grater. The tomato is quickly reduced to a thick purée and the skin is left behind.

SEEDING: Very juicy tomatoes may make a dish too watery. To reduce the juiciness, hold the tomato over a bowl, squeeze it gently, and work out the seeds with your fingers. Use the juice in a vinaigrette.

SLICING AND CORING: A serrated knife works best on stubborn tomato skin (for a tomato knife, see p. 72). To remove the core, use a sharp paring knife to carve a V-shape around it, or scoop it out with a handy gadget called a tomato shark (for sources, see p. 80).

Delicious ways to use fresh tomatoes

When tomato season arrives, I can't wait to slice a few and eat them just drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with salt, or tucked into a juicy, drippy tomato sandwich. When those cravings are satisfied, I move on to other preparations, like the pasta with a no-cook sauce on p. 16, or one of my favorite ideas below.

For a beautiful salad platter, slice up different-colored tomatoes. Drizzle with a vinaigrette made with olive oil, balsamic vinegar, a spoonful of pesto, and salt and pepper. For a party, alternate the tomatoes with slices of fresh mozzarella, set out sliced toasted bread, and let guests build their own appetizers.

Make my favorite variation on a BLT: bacon, arugula, tomato, and avocado. To gild the lily, spread on softened blue cheese or fresh goat cheese.

For an authentic bruschetta, grill or toast a slice of country bread, brush lightly with olive oil, and rub a peeled clove of garlic over the surface of the bread. Cut a medium-size ripe tomato in half horizontally and rub one half of the tomato onto the bread until the tomato flesh is thoroughly massaged into the toast. Top with basil.

Stir up a cool, tangy gazpacho from finely diced tomatoes, cucumbers, onion, and sweet peppers. Season with salt, pepper, minced garlic, and herbs. Add some minced jalapeño and lime juice or red-wine vinegar for spunk, and round out the flavors with a little olive oil. Refrigerate for at least an hour before serving.

Slow-roast beefsteak tomatoes. Cut the tops from tomatoes and gently squeeze out the juice and seeds. Set the tomatoes upright in a shallow baking dish, drizzle with olive oil, and season with minced garlic, salt, pepper, and minced herbs like rosemary, thyme, or parsley. Roast at 325°F until the tomatoes are soft and have collapsed. Serve as a savory side dish, or roast further until they're drier and use them as a topping for crostini or pizza.

Simmer up some fresh tomato soup. Sweat diced onion, celery, and fennel in a little oil. Add cut-up tomatoes and chicken, beef, or vegetable broth, cover, and simmer until tender. Pass the soup through a food mill or blend and strain, and then reheat. Enrich with a bit of butter and stir in minced chives, dill, or fennel leaf.

Use cherry tomatoes to brighten a bread salad. They hold up well. Combine 2 cups halved cherry tomatoes with two cucumbers, one sweet pepper and one onion, all diced, and toss with about $\frac{2}{3}$ cup well-seasoned vinaigrette. About 20 minutes before serving,

add about 4 cups cubed day-old country bread or lightly toasted pita, torn into pieces, and toss well. Toss again just before serving.

Make an elegant, rich-tasting tomato sauce.

Sweat diced onion, carrots, and celery in butter. Add cut-up tomatoes, salt, and pepper and simmer until soft enough to pass through a food mill. Reheat with a touch of cream, and then use it to top cheese-filled ravioli or tortellini.

Garnish grilled fish with a tiny dice of tomato. Gently seed tomatoes and dice the flesh into tiny, even cubes. Drizzle a tablespoon of dark green, fruity olive oil onto a warm dinner plate, strew a couple of tablespoons of tomato dice over the oil, and arrange a piece of grilled fish on top.

Dress up breakfast with sautéed tomatoes. When the bacon or sausage is done, add thick tomato slices (or halves, cut side down) to the pan. Cook just until blistered and warm, and serve with sunny-side-up eggs, toast, and coffee.

Fry or pickle end-of-season green tomatoes. Dip sliced green tomatoes in beaten egg, dredge in cornmeal, and fry until tender throughout and crisp on the outside. Or brine fat wedges of green tomato in vinegar seasoned with salt, dill, and garlic, just like dill pickles.

Ruth Lively is the former senior editor of Kitchen Gardener magazine. ♦

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READER SERVICE NO. 89

Nonstick Skillets

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

Whether you're watching your fat intake, love the easy clean-up, or wouldn't consider cooking an egg in anything else, a nonstick skillet can be an invaluable kitchen tool. But it's next to useless if it doesn't conduct heat well and hold up to wear and tear. We tested 16 nonstick skillets and discovered that while most of them are quite good, some are better than others and are intrinsically built to last longer.

We broke in each pan by frying heavily salted beef and simmering a tomato sauce before we ran our tests: We fried ten eggs in a row with just an initial swipe of oil as well as with no oil at all; we made omelets; and we sautéed skinless chicken breasts. To evaluate even heating, we made pan-size pancakes.

Buying tips

A nonstick surface is only as good as the pan to which it adheres. Pans that don't conduct heat well leave the nonstick coating vulnerable to hot spots, which will degrade the coating over time.

Next to expensive copper, aluminum is the best conductor of heat. Look for anodized aluminum (which is extremely hard and more durable), densely molded vacuum-cast aluminum, or "clad" pans (which consist of one or more aluminum layers sandwiched between stainless steel).

In general, top-of-the-line nonstick surfaces have three coats applied to the pan, but, unfortunately, not all three-coat nonstick surfaces are top of the line. Many pans advertise the brand name of the coating, such as DuPont's Autograph. You can go to the coating manufacturer's web site to find out if this is one of its top products. Otherwise, it's difficult to judge the quality of a nonstick coating at face value.

After running 16 nonstick pans through a series of tests, these five (listed alphabetically) stood out as the best.



All-Clad Stainless

\$115 for a 10-inch skillet
2 pounds, 10 ounces
ovensafe to 400°F
www.allclad.com

- ❖ This was the only pan that gladly released a fried egg with no oil at all.
- ❖ This pan's thick core consists of three separate layers of aluminum sandwiched between a stainless-steel cooking surface and pan exterior.
- ❖ Metal utensils may be used but could cause scratching.
- ❖ Two deterrents: sticker price and stainless rivets that get gunked up easily.

Berndes SignoCast Classic

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- ❖ After prolonged use, this pan doesn't get as hot as most other pans, which bodes especially well for making the nonstick coating last.
- ❖ We liked the thick, super-flat base made of vacuum-cast aluminum, a three-layer nonstick interior coating, and a two-layer nonstick exterior surface for easy cleanup.
- ❖ The straight edge on the pan lip makes it difficult to slide an omelet out, but the shallow sides make it easy to reach into the pan with a utensil.



How to get the most from your nonstick pan

During testing, we learned that how you take care of a nonstick pan is just as important as which one you buy. A few basic precautions will help the nonstick coating on your pans last:

1. Avoid temperatures above 500°F; otherwise, the nonstick surface will soften (though not visibly), and the coating will wear off. Medium heat and no higher is the standard recommendation, although one manufacturer's representative said medium-high heat is fine, just not for prolonged periods. Don't heat an empty pan for more than a few minutes.
2. Beware: At medium-high heat or higher, oils start to carbonize, forming a hard film on the surface that's difficult to see and scrub off. This is often the first reason why your nonstick coating stops releasing. (For more information on the best oils to use with nonstick pans, see p. 72.)
3. For the reason above, never use cooking spray on a nonstick pan. It's so thin that it burns invisibly onto the pan.
4. Don't be fooled by how easy these pans seem to clean. Use some elbow grease to be sure you clean off the thin film of oil that may have cooked on. A sponge and hot, soapy water usually works fine. For tough spots, use a nonabrasive cleanser and a cleaning pad that's labeled safe for nonsticks.
5. If metal utensils are said to be fine with your nonstick, use them only when you have to. Even if they don't actually scratch the coating, the abrasion will help wear it out.

Circulon Style

\$69.99 for a 10-inch skillet
2 pounds, 8 ounces
ovensafe to 500°F
www.circulon.com

- ❖ We liked how this pan rolled out omelets without a hitch.
- ❖ Its three-coat nonstick surface has a "high-low" grooved pattern that's more refined than the lower-priced Circulon Classic, making it easier to use and clean.
- ❖ This pan has an anodized-aluminum core and pan base with an easy-to-clean colored (or stainless-steel) exterior.

KitchenAid 5-Ply Stainless

\$93 for a 10-inch skillet
2 pounds, 9 ounces
ovensafe to 500°F
www.kitchenaid.com

- ❖ We especially liked the golden crust on the boneless chicken breast that we sautéed in this pan.
- ❖ Overall, this pan delivered solid nonstick performance, though it did need a little bit of jiggling to loosen some fried eggs.
- ❖ It has a stainless-steel exterior with aluminum-clad core and three coats of nonstick.
- ❖ One complaint: the pan can wobble slightly if not full.

Nordic Ware Commercial

\$47 for a 10-inch skillet
2 pounds, 5 ounces
ovensafe to 400°F
www.nordicware.com

- ❖ Ten fried eggs, flawlessly flipped, is hard to beat. It was a cinch with this pan.
- ❖ Made of hardened aluminum alloy, it has a three-coat nonstick surface that cleverly coats the rivets.
- ❖ The removable rubber handle cover has a nice grip but is a nuisance to remove for the oven and doesn't do much good if you tend to choke up on the handle.

Maryellen Driscoll is an editor at large for Fine Cooking. ♦

Safely using a marinade for basting
Often when I grill, I like to baste the meat with its marinade. Is this safe? Also, can I use just one brush for basting throughout a grill session?

—James Martin, Macon, Georgia

A Dr. Karen Penner replies: The safest way to use a marinade for basting during grilling is to bring it to a boil first to kill any bacteria that may be in the marinade from the raw meat that was in it. Once the meat is on the grill and the marinade has been boiled, you can safely use a spoon or a basting bulb (rather than a brush) to flow the liquid onto the meat. Hold the spoon or the tip of the bulb slightly above the meat as it cooks, avoiding direct contact with the meat's surface. This way, you can have your meat and marinade, too, without worrying if the brush or the meat will become contaminated.

Dr. Karen Penner is a professor and extension specialist at Kansas State University.

Double-wrap foods to avoid freezer burn
What is freezer burn, and what's the best way to prevent it?

—Kim Nardini, Orlando, Florida

A Shirley O. Corriher replies: Freezer burn is the drying out of a food's surface caused by the intensely dry conditions in a freezer. This drying out occurs when foods haven't been properly wrapped, and it adversely affects a frozen product's texture and flavor.

Although this phenomenon affects all foods, it's most noticeable in meats. The drying process causes the protein cells in the affected area to shrink, and, as a result of oxidization, the area discolors slightly.

Most freezers today have an automatic defrosting feature which contributes to freezer burn: it causes periodic temperature shifts, which make foods thaw and then freeze again. These temperature swings draw water to the food's surface where it freezes, further drying out the food. This problem is particularly noticeable in ice cream when ice crystals form on its surface.

The best way to prevent freezer burn is to use a double-wrap system. Wrap foods first in plastic and then seal them in an airtight plastic bag. This initial layer keeps moisture from escaping (and, thus, the food from drying out), while the secondary layer prevents oxidation. Some of the new sealable freezer bags available in supermarkets have this double layer and are a good purchase. To keep ice crystals from forming on ice cream, put a layer of plastic wrap directly on the surface of the ice cream.

Food scientist Shirley O. Corriher is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking and the author of Cookwise.

A three-zone fire controls flare-ups
What's the best way to control flare-ups on the grill?

—Sue Pritzker, Littleton, New Hampshire

A Steve Raichlen replies: Flare-ups are an inevitable part of grilling, which, at their worst, can burn food, scare dinner guests, and endanger patio foliage.

The best way to control flare-ups is through prevention. Try working over a three-zone fire—with hot, medium, and cool areas—and leave plenty of open space on the grate. This way, if a flare-up occurs, you can quickly move the food to a safer, cooler area.

To build a three-zone fire, rake the coals into a double-thick layer on one part of the grill (the hot searing zone), make a single layer in the center (the moderate cooking zone), and leave the remaining part of the grill coal-free (the cool safety zone). For a gas grill, set one burner on high, one on medium, and leave the third burner off.

You can also take other precautions prior to grilling like trimming excess fat from meat, draining oil-based marinades, and emptying the drip pan of a gas grill.

If you do have a flare-up, try covering the grill. This deprives the fire of oxygen and eventually extinguishes the flames. You can also try spraying a few squirts of water on the flames with a mister or a water pistol. Do this sparingly, as the water and resulting steam may stir up ash in a charcoal grill. As a last resort, use long tongs to transfer the food from the grill to a platter and sprinkle salt or baking soda over the fire to extinguish it.

Steve Raichlen is the author of The Barbecue Bible. ♦

Have a question of general interest about cooking? Send it to Q&A, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by e-mail to fc@taunton.com, and we'll find a cooking professional with the answer.

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It's crush time

BY AMY ALBERT

For wineries throughout the northern hemisphere, it will soon be crush time—the action-packed weeks when grapes are picked and crushed, their juice laid down to ferment into wine. Depending on the region and the weather, crush starts in August and continues into November.

Crush is both the culmination of the growing season and the beginning of a winemaker's year. "It's my first chance to interact with the grapes, the first step in a long process," says Peter Bell, winemaker at Fox Run Vineyards, a small winery in the Finger Lakes region of New York.

When it comes to American wine, the West Coast usually gets all the attention. So it was with great curiosity and interest that I went to visit the Finger Lakes, an up-and-coming region that's fast-emerging territory for seriously delicious and prizewinning Riesling, as well as Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir. Last fall, I got to see the 2001 harvest in full swing at Fox Run Vineyards, experiencing firsthand the bustle, hard work, and excitement that typify crush everywhere.

Judging when to pick

Riesling grapes thrive in the Finger Lakes, a cool climate wine-making region. A shorter growing season, less heat, and more humidity pose challenges compared to places like California, Australia, and southern France. First-rate wine is crafted here—but skilled winemaking is crucial. And as the grapes ripen in the early autumn light, every ray of sun matters.

"A ripe grape yields to gentle pressure but springs back slightly," says Peter Bell, who insists on feeling grapes for ripeness as well as on tasting them.

A refractometer measures sugar level, but it's just one way to judge ripeness. Bell consults constantly with vineyard manager John Kaiser, squeezing, tasting, chewing, spitting, and watching the weather to figure out just when it's picking time.

"I don't know what we'd do without them," says Bell of his loyal picking crew. Guadalupe Feria and others pick in the early morning, when the grapes are still cool, to preserve flavors. The pickers are meticulous, picking only ripe grapes and leaving less-than-perfect fruit. *(Continued)*



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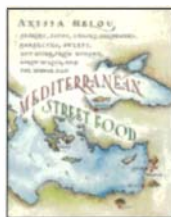


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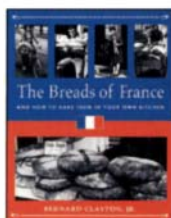


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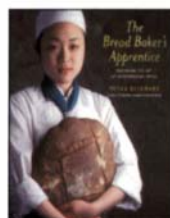


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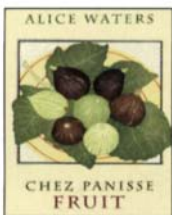


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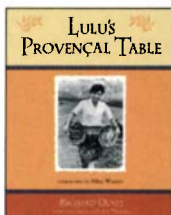


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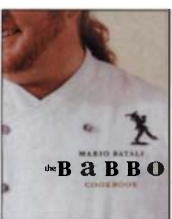


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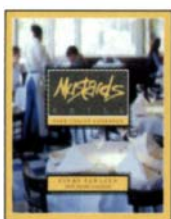


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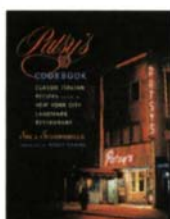


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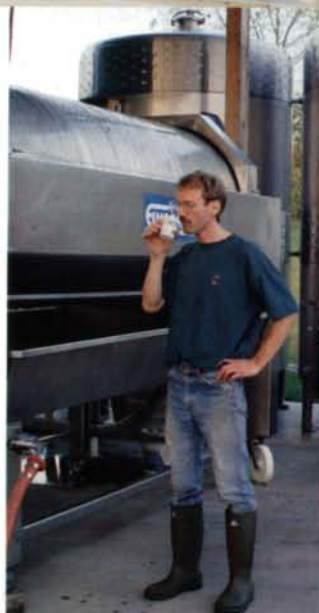


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Juggling demands

Different grape varieties pose different demands: juggling them is one of the biggest challenges of all at crush time. "The pace ramps way up and all of a sudden I have ten things to do at once," says Bell. In a single morning, he'll watch newly picked Chardonnay grapes go from the crusher-stemmer and into the press. He'll punch down newly crushed Pinot Noir (to submerge the grape skins, which ensures even fermentation, concentrated flavor, and intense color). And he'll taste Gewurztraminer juice fresh off the press ("rich and soft, with an intense burst of ripe flavors and an aroma of rose petals").

Amy Albert is Fine Cooking's senior editor. ♦



Analyzing, deciding, and acting

Fox Run's assistant winemaker, Peter Howe, transfers Chardonnay juice from tank to barrel, where the wine will start fermenting in oak.

Like cooking, making wine demands knowing your ingredients and making smart choices. Yet, "it's different from cooking in that I won't know the outcome for months to come—but that's part of the fun," Bell tells me. In the coming months, he'll be intent on making the wine the best it can be: analyzing, filtering, tasting, blending, bottling, and moving wine from tank to barrel. "A certain amount of crystal-ball gazing is required," he muses. "I rely on past experience and look forward to the results."



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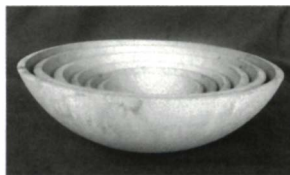
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Why We Taste Things the Way We Do

Sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and umami (we'll explain in a minute) interact in surprising ways

BY SHIRLEY O. CORRIHER

We tend to use the words "taste" and "flavor" interchangeably, but scientifically speaking, they're not the same. We have physical taste receptors on our tongues and in our mouths for only five primary tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and the savory sensation called umami, which the Japanese have recognized for decades but whose receptor cells were identified just five years ago.

Taste buds contain clusters of 50 to 100 receptor cells that represent all five tastes. Maps of the tongue that show distinct tasting areas (e.g., sweetness on the tip and sour on the sides) are incorrect. While some areas are more sensitive to certain tastes, we actually have receptors for all five tastes on all areas of the tongue.

Why might we need receptors for these five tastes? In a basic biological sense, a sweet taste rewards us with energy-producing sugars, bitter warns us of possible toxins (naturally occurring toxins taste bitter), salty points out essential minerals, and umami (pronounced oo-MAH-mee) indicates the presence of life-sustaining proteins.

"Flavor" refers to these five tastes plus much more—texture, aroma, color, even physical irritation—all the things that help us recognize a food as being herby, nutty, spicy, fruity, etc. Aroma is key to identifying these flavors, as our sense of smell is much more refined than our sense of taste.

By knowing something about how the five tastes play off one

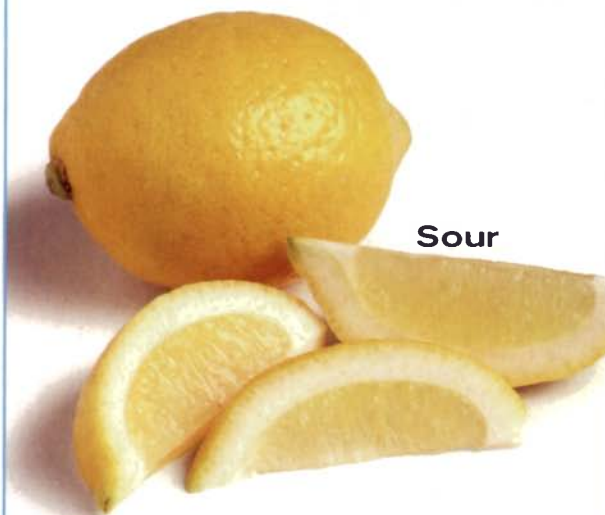
another, you'll become better at manipulating them to make your food taste as delicious as it can.

Salt cuts bitterness, which enhances sweetness

Salt flavors food directly by triggering our salt receptors, but it also influences flavor in other complex and indirect ways. As pastry chefs know, adding a pinch of salt to desserts can actually highlight sweetness. Salt reduces bitterness in a dish, and this magnifies sweetness. To test this for yourself, pour two samples of tonic water, which is both bitter (from the quinine) and sweet (from sugar syrup). Taste one sample straight and add a pinch of salt to the other. The salted tonic water seems to lose its bitterness and taste al-



Salty



Sour



Sweet

most like sugar water. If you've ever sprinkled salt on grapefruit or cantaloupe and marveled at how the fruit seemed to become sweeter, you've tasted this phenomenon in action.

Sugar can draw out hidden flavors

Sugar stimulates our receptors in an interesting way, bringing out flavors that we otherwise wouldn't perceive. Researchers at the University of Nottingham in England demonstrated this by asking volunteers to chew sweetened mint-flavored gum until the flavor was gone. Although the volunteers couldn't taste any mint, the researchers found mint gas was still present in their subjects' nasal cavities. Given sugar, the volunteers said the mint flavor returned. For cooks, the point is simply this: A bit of sweetness can bring out other flavors in food. Just a pinch of sugar in a savory dish can make a big flavor difference. For example, I add a bit of sugar to my salad dressings.

Sour ingredients can correct imbalances

Acids can balance out flavors that have veered too far in a certain direction. You can some-

times rectify a dish that tastes too salty by adding a mild acid like lemon juice or vinegar. These types of sour ingredients can also tame a dish that's too spicy.

Acidic ingredients have a marvelous ability to brighten food—a spritz of lemon or lime often seems to make a dish's flavor come to life. All sour substances have a single hydrogen atom proton that directly triggers our sour receptors. This hydrogen atom is small and reacts rapidly with many ingredients, giving acids their great power to quickly add zing to our food.

Umami ingredients build on one another

Just as sugar and salt stimulate certain taste receptors, many foods that contain small protein pieces (such as nucleotides and salts of glutamic acid) stimulate our umami receptors. Umami is hard to describe; it's sometimes referred to as "tastiness" or "savoriness" or "mouth satisfaction." Umami stimulators are abundant in wine, eggs, spinach, ripe tomatoes, mushrooms, soy sauce, and aged cheeses, especially Parmesan, to name just a few.

One very interesting property of umami-tasting compounds is their magnifying effect on one

another. Studies have shown that combining two umami compounds produces eight times more flavor than you would get with a single umami compound tasted alone. Put into a culinary context, this means that cooking with, say, either mushrooms or Parmesan will give a dish some umami "tastiness," but if you use mushrooms and Parmesan together, you'll have enormously more "tastiness" than you would get with either ingredient alone.

Opposite tastes attract

Here's one more tip for making food taste great: don't let your taste receptors get bored. As the food scientist Harold McGee has noted, repeated exposure to the same taste causes the receptors to gradually lessen their response to the taste. Variation and contrast are key to keeping our taste receptors stimulated. Playing sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and umami tastes off one another—whether you're serving sweet apples with aged cheese or a sweet-sour sauce for meat—makes physiological sense.

Shirley O. Corriher, a food scientist and a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, is the author of CookWise. ♦

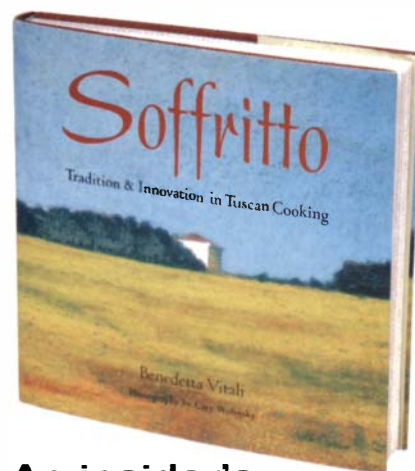
Taste buds contain clusters of 50 to 100 taste receptor cells that represent all five tastes.





“Grill” cheese

Halloumi, the traditional cheese of Cypress made from sheep's and goat's milk, might become your new summer favorite: try it grilled and layered with fresh basil on crusty bread or fried and tossed with tomatoes. Halloumi's saltiness is reminiscent of feta, but after being seared, its soft, melty texture is closer to mozzarella. *An 8-ounce portion is \$7 at World of Cheese (831-438-7183; www.worldofcheese.com); it's also available at Middle Eastern and gourmet food stores.*



An insider's Tuscan cookbook

Soffritto, the work of chef Benedetta Vitali, is a guided tour of her restaurant kitchen in Florence. Vitali's interpretations of Tuscan classics, like Ribollita (white bean soup) and Bistecca alla Fiorentina (Florentine steak), and the book's serene, intimate photographs chronicle the integral relationship between Italian food and tradition. *Available at bookstores for \$32.50.*

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WINNING TIP

Make a homemade utensil rack

I have a small kitchen and a large collection of utensils. I like the look and convenience of hanging my kitchen tools, but the racks on the market were so expensive that I bought some hardware to make my own. I mounted large cup hooks in a row under the upper kitchen cabinets about 3 inches from the wall, and then pushed a 4-foot aluminum rod through the hooks and hung some small "S" hooks on the rod to hang the utensils on. Now my gadgets are instantly available, I gained drawer space, and the display looks cool.

—Shirley Hooper, Kuna, Idaho

Oiling vegetables lightly and quickly

When a recipe calls for brushing vegetables with oil before grilling or roasting, I put the vegetables in a resealable plastic bag, add a little oil, and coat the vegetables by massaging them through the plastic. It's much faster and you won't end up with oily hands or too much oil on the food.

—Elizabeth Kannel,
Chicago, Illinois

A knife for all seasons

I bought an inexpensive tomato knife in my local kitchenware shop, and I've found that its narrow blade is not only great for cutting tomatoes, it's also perfect for slicing through soft, moist foods like ripe cheeses, pâtés, braunschweiger, liverwurst, and bananas. Wider knife blades usually mangle these foods. My tomato knife has a molded plastic handle and a very

narrow, curved, serrated blade about 5 inches long and ½ inch wide, tapering down to a sharp point. You can use other tomato knives the same way.

—Russ Shumaker,
Richmond, Virginia

Serve lobster with infused garlic butter

When melting butter to serve with lobster, I like to add small quantities of finely chopped garlic, citrus zest, or fresh herbs to the butter an hour or two before serving. Keeping the melted butter warm gives the flavoring time to infuse the butter more fully.

—E. Burr, via e-mail

Make compound butter to use up fresh herbs

Since supermarkets sell fresh herbs by the bunch and recipes

usually only call for a teaspoon of them, I combine the remaining herbs in my food processor with cold, unsalted butter. Then I shape the compound butter into small logs, wrap them in several layers of plastic wrap, and refrigerate or freeze them. Compound butters are great for flavoring pasta, grilled fish or chicken, sauces, etc.

—Antoinne Rimes,
San Francisco, California

Smoke food on the grill with a hunk of wood

I never use water-soaked smoking chips while grilling because the chips produce more steam than smoke and quickly dry out and burn up. Instead, I use a chunk of hardwood around 8 to 10 inches long and about 2 inches thick. I wrap the wood loosely in a double layer of foil and poke holes in it for the smoke to escape. When set on

the coals, the foil-wrapped wood provides a lot of smoke for a long time but it can't burst into flame because the foil prevents it from getting enough oxygen. A side benefit is that when you open the foil later on, you'll find a nice piece of charcoal to start your next grilling job.

—Vic Bastien,
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Soak pans in dishwasher detergent

I use automatic dishwasher detergent and hot water to soak my stainless-steel, ceramic, and glass (but not nonstick) pans. The powerful detergent makes quick work of even the hardest cooked-on mess.

—Lane Johnson,
via e-mail

Cover grilled food for faster cooking

When grilling, take a tip from short-order cooks and keep a high-domed lid (like a wok lid) on hand to cover food so it cooks more quickly without having to



close the whole grill. This technique helps me serve grilled steaks cooked medium rare to well done, all at the same time.

—Paul Vinett,
Norwalk, Connecticut

Self-cleaning oven cleans grill racks, too

Whenever I use my oven's self-cleaning feature, I also put the black, heavily encrusted racks from my charcoal and gas grills in the oven to clean; they always come out like new. Just be sure your grill racks are sturdy enough to withstand the extremely high heat of the self-cleaning cycle.

—Mimi Christie,
Ramsey, New Jersey

Make roasted chiles for delicious Mexican fare

In summer, I pick a variety of colorful fresh chiles at a nearby farm to roast and preserve. I use a charcoal grill to try to approximate the mouthwatering flavor of fire-roasted chiles from the Southwest. Once my roasted chiles are peeled and seeded, I keep some to use and freeze the rest flat in freezer bags. I use them in quesadillas, on grilled pizzas, in huevos rancheros, in salsas, and in soft tacos.

—Joe Sylvester,
Papillion, Nebraska

Steam helps clean the microwave

Before cleaning the interior of your microwave, bring a cup of water to a boil in the microwave and boil it for an additional minute or two. The condensation from the hot water is enough to loosen most cooked-on splatters. Carefully remove the hot water and wipe the inside of the microwave clean.

—Mary Anne Meyer,
Vermillion, South Dakota

Keep roasted garlic on hand

In summer when garlic is cheap (five for \$1 at my local farmers' market), I buy 50 heads and roast them all at once on foil-covered baking sheets. After the roasted garlic has cooled slightly,



I snip the top off each clove with scissors and squeeze the garlic into the food processor, adding a bit of my best olive oil and then whipping the garlic into a smooth, golden purée. I divide the purée among a number of very small plastic containers and freeze them for use throughout the next three or four months. One container of roasted garlic is always in my refrigerator, ready to enhance bruschetta, mashed potatoes, soups, roasted meat—you name it.

—Jamie Miller,
Maple Grove, Minnesota

Dry your herbs at the office

If you work in a painfully dry office building like mine, consider making the dryness work for you by bringing your fresh herbs to work. My herbs dry to a crisp in a few days with no exposure to heat or sunlight. All you need is a bit of extra desk space.

—Joe St. Lawrence,
via e-mail

Clean roasted peppers without the mess

After roasting red peppers, I put them in a plastic bag to steam. About half an hour later, I massage the peppers through the bag to remove the blackened skin, seeds, and cores. This keeps the mess to a minimum, and, best of all, the peppers emerge clean as a whistle.

—Paula Wolfert,
Sonoma, California ♦

HOW TO ENTER TO WIN

Attention clever cooks: We want your best tips. We'll pay for the ones we publish—and we'll give a prize (see below) to the cleverest tip in each issue. Write to Tips, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506 or send e-mail to fc@taunton.com.



The prize:
The hollow-ground edge on this 6½-inch Japanese-style knife by Wüsthof prevents vegetables from sticking to the blade by allowing air pockets to form, making it the ideal tool for cutting, dicing, or thinly slicing any vegetable, especially potatoes. Value: \$105.

Juicy, Tender Grilled



Try brushing grilled chicken with a maple-bourbon glaze (recipe, p. 38) instead of the usual barbecue sauce.

Chicken

For the best texture, brine first; for perfectly cooked chicken, keep your eye on the grill

BY MOLLY STEVENS

Ever since my first hibachi on the rooftop of my Brooklyn apartment many years ago, I've loved to grill outdoors in the warm (and sometimes not-so-warm) weather. Over the years, I like to think that I've gotten pretty good at grilling just about anything—steaks, chops, ribs, fish, vegetables, sausages, you name it—with one very big exception. I always had trouble grilling bone-in chicken pieces. It seemed that the skin would end up incinerated while the meat would be a combination of overly dry on the outside and too pink near the bone. The easy answer was to stick only to boneless, skinless chicken pieces, but these got boring pretty quickly, and I missed the flavor and juiciness from bone-in chicken.

So a few summers ago, I decided that it was time to find a better solution. Through a little bit of trial-and-error cooking, I learned how to make tender, moist chicken that's cooked all the way through on any kind of grill. Whether I used charcoal (my favorite) or gas or even my old hibachi, I learned that brining the chicken first guaranteed juiciness (see the sidebar at right). Then I worked out the master method to get juicy, perfectly cooked chicken every time.

Half the fun of real grilling is that you control the process

If you have time, you can get chicken to cook thoroughly on the grill by closing the lid and cooking the pieces indirectly over a not-



too-hot fire. While this certainly works and can be delicious when you take a slow-and-low approach and actually barbecue the chicken, it really can't be called grilled chicken. If you turn up the heat and leave the lid on to prevent flare-ups, the chicken tends to taste too much like the underside of the grill cover. So I prefer to wrestle with the challenge of real grilling: without a cover over a medium-hot fire.

Whether you cook over gas or charcoal, you'll still have to move chicken pieces around. The primary reason that bone-in chicken is so tricky on the grill is that the individual pieces vary in thickness. Chicken breasts, for example, are quite thick near the breastbone and taper to very thin at the ribs and tail end. Likewise, drumsticks have one big fat end and one pretty narrow end. What this means is that a little maneuvering is the key to getting chicken pieces to cook evenly (see the directions in the recipe on p. 37).

Once your grill is set up, it's really just a matter of standing by and keeping an eye on the chicken as it cooks. Grilling is not a walk-away enterprise. You need to monitor the chicken, listen to hear that it's sizzling (but

Brining is the key to juicy chicken

Taste brined chicken side-by-side with a non-brined piece, and you'll be converted. An amazing bit of culinary alchemy happens when you soak chicken for a few hours (or even less) in a solution of salt with a bit of sugar; I like to add a few spices to the brine as well (see the recipe on p. 37). The salt and sugar in the brine make the meat actually absorb some water, which means that it will remain juicier when it's cooked. The salt also adds a nice savory flavor to the bird that you won't get by just seasoning the surface. The chicken firms up a bit through the brining process, making it a bit less floppy on the grill. And brined chicken pieces seem to cook more uniformly, meaning fewer problems with pink meat near the bone and dry meat on the outside.

Leave the lid off and keep the fire jumping



Dump hot coals to one side of the grill. A chimney starter is an easy, efficient way to get the coals going.



For a hot fire to last, it needs extra coals. Add 4 to 5 quarts of charcoal so they'll be ready when the first coals die.



A garden rake is handy for arranging coals. Cover only three-quarters of the grill with coals; leave a small area "cool."



Start the chicken skin side up to avoid early flare-ups. Flip the pieces when they're beginning to brown.

watch to see that it's not burning), and move the pieces around as necessary, but not too much or you'll slow down the cooking. And how can you tell when the chicken is done? The quickest way is to cut into a piece and check to see if the juices are clear. This "cut and peek" method is the simplest and most reliable. You can also use an instant-read thermometer in several places (be sure to insert it at least 2 inches) and look for an internal temperature of 170°F. If some pieces are done before the rest, simply slide them to the cooler edges of the grill, tucking them close together to prevent them from overcooking, yet keeping them warm.

Once you get into it, you'll find that half the fun of grilling is that you control the entire process—the other half of the fun is the eating. The best way I've found to grill successfully is to get a chair, something cold to drink, and either a friend to talk to or a good magazine to flip through.

Decide how (and if) you want to add extra flavor to your chicken

The thing about brined and grilled chicken is that you really don't need any embellishment. The chicken will be remarkably delicious as is, but if you're a lily-gilder, like me, you can certainly add a good jolt of seasoning just before, during, or after cooking.

Spice rubs, herb pastes, basting sauces, and, perhaps my favorite—a little finishing sauce—are all great with grilled chicken. With rubs and pastes, put them on the chicken pieces just before you start heating the grill—this will give them 30 to 40 minutes to season the meat as the grill heats up. For extra flavor, smear a little of the seasoning under the skin of the chicken, too. (For sauce recipes, see p. 38.)



drink choices

To partner grilled chicken's zesty flavors, look to medium-bodied red wines or beer

Brined, grilled chicken massaged with a zingy rub means you'll have some robust flavors on the plate that call for easy-drinking wines or beers. A fruity Syrah or a medium-bodied Zinfandel would be my first choice for the grilled chicken served with the Black Olive & Mint Vinaigrette. Look for Delicato True Blue Shiraz (\$8) or Seghesio Sonoma Zinfandel (\$16.50), both from California.

The chipotle-lime rub calls for a lighter-style beer to take the edge off the spicy

flavors (Syrah or Zinfandel can be a bit higher in alcohol, and when spice and alcohol get together, they tend to juke each other up, resulting in too much heat). Red Stripe (\$6.50) from Jamaica or Mexico's Corona (\$6) are two good choices.

With the smoky-sweet maple-bourbon glaze, try a richer beer such as Anchor Steam's Liberty Ale (\$7) or Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale (\$3 for a 550ml bottle).

Tim Gaiser, a master sommelier, is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking.

Brined & Grilled Chicken

Serves four.

I like to cut up my own chicken, but if you buy preportioned chicken, cut the breasts in half to make manageable pieces. I like to brine the chicken pieces for at least 2 hours, but even an hour makes a difference.

1 chicken (3½ to 4 pounds), cut into 10 pieces (2 drumsticks, 2 thighs, 4 breast pieces, and 2 wings; back discarded) or 2½ to 3 pounds mixed bone-in, skin-on chicken parts, such as breasts, thighs, and drumsticks

½ cup kosher salt

3 tablespoons granulated sugar

1 bay leaf (optional)

4 to 6 juniper berries, lightly crushed (optional)

4 strips lemon zest (optional)

Basting or finishing sauce (optional; see the recipes on p. 38)

Brine the chicken: Rinse the chicken pieces and set aside. In a large bowl or non-reactive pot, dissolve the salt and sugar in 5 cups cold water. Add the spices and zest, if using. Submerge the chicken pieces in the brine, adding more cold water as needed so that the brine covers the chicken. If the chicken tends to bob above the surface, set a plate on top to weight it down. Refrigerate for 2 to 4 hours. Prepare any sauce you like from the recipes on p. 38 (or from your own repertoire). Remove the chicken from the brine, discard the brine, quickly rinse the chicken and pat each piece dry with paper towels. If you're using a rub, put it on the chicken just before you get the fire ready.

Set up your grill: For charcoal, build a medium-hot fire that's big enough to last for 35 to 40 minutes without losing its fire-power. This means adding 4 or 5 quarts of charcoal to the starter coals after the fire is started. Once the whole heap is burning nicely and beginning to appear white, arrange the coals so that they only cover about three-quarters of the grill. This way you have a cool spot to move the chicken if it starts to burn or to cook too quickly. If you don't have a grill rake to even out the coals, you can use a small garden rake or hoe. The fire is ready when you can hold your palm over the main area of the fire for about 3 seconds. For a gas grill, heat all the burners to medium high for 10 to 15 minutes before you start grilling.



Pick your favorite piece. A crowd-pleasing platter of brined, grilled chicken gets an extra kick from a chipotle-lime rub.

Cook the chicken: Start the chicken by putting the drumsticks and breasts, skin side up, over the medium-hot part of the fire. Starting skin side up eliminates some risk of initial flare-ups when the fire is at its hottest. (Since thighs and wings take about 5 minutes less to cook, start these later.) Watch the chicken carefully, and if it becomes engulfed in flames from dripping fat, move the pieces to the cooler part of the grill, or turn down the flame on one of the gas grill burners. You want to sear the pieces without charring. When the breasts and drumsticks are beginning to brown, after 5 or 6 minutes, flip them. At this time, put the remaining pieces on the grill, skin side up, and cook them as you did the breasts.

Continue cooking, flipping the pieces every 6 to 8 minutes. If you have an older gas grill that doesn't exactly crank out the heat and you find that the thicker pieces aren't cooking through, either close the lid to create more of an ovenlike atmosphere, or plop an old cake pan or disposable aluminum baking pan upside down over the pieces to help retain some of the grill's heat. Keep in mind, however, that you don't want to flip or move the chicken pieces too often—this will only slow down the cooking process. The chicken is done when an instant-read thermometer registers 170°F, or when the juices run clear when the chicken is pierced. If you're not sure, cut into a piece of chicken and take a peek. *(Continued)*

Even-size pieces grill best

For grilling, smaller chicken pieces that are similar in size are ideal. I like to buy one small whole bird (about four pounds) and cut it up myself (see *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 70), but you can certainly ask your butcher to do this. With a whole bird, you get a good mix of dark and light meat (which works well at my house), and you get much more evenly sized pieces than if you were to buy a package of chicken pieces, but in a pinch, these are just fine. Whether I'm cutting up a whole bird or dealing with pre-cut parts, I generally cut each split breast in half crosswise to make two smaller portions. These smaller pieces will cook at about the same rate as the rest of the parts.

Baste, rub, or top grilled chicken for extra flavor

Ever since I discovered brining, I'll admit that I've pretty much given up on traditional marinades for chicken. Instead, I like to brush on a sauce before, during, and especially after grilling. (If you plan to use a baste as a finishing sauce, be sure to reserve some that doesn't come into contact with the raw chicken.)

The sky's the limit on other ways to finish grilled chicken—try vinaigrettes, salsas, flavored butters, pestos, or one of my favorite sauces at right.



Sauce on the side. Cucumber-Grape Salsa and Black Olive & Mint Vinaigrette are two great ways to flavor chicken after grilling.

Chipotle-Lime Rub

Yields about 1 cup; enough for 1 chicken.

Coat the chicken pieces with this spicy paste while the grill is heating. Brush on any extra during grilling. Serve with the Cucumber-Grape Salsa (at right) or your favorite salsa.

1/3 cup fresh lime juice
3 to 4 cloves garlic, very finely minced
2 chipotles (from a can of chipotles in adobo), minced
2 tablespoons adobo sauce (from the can of chipotles)
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1/4 cup olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl. Put the chicken pieces in a nonreactive dish or a large zip-top bag and pour the sauce over them. With your hands, lift the skin of the chicken pieces a bit so that the rub can get underneath and rub the pieces all over with the seasonings. Refrigerate for 30 to 45 minutes.

Maple-Bourbon Glaze

Yields about 2/3 cup; enough for 1 chicken.

Brush this glaze on the chicken during the last 10 minutes of cooking. Coat one side, cook for 5 minutes, flip, brush the other side, cook another 5 minutes, and flip once more to heat the glaze. You can use any classic barbecue sauce the same way.

2/3 cup fresh orange juice
1/3 cup pure maple syrup, preferably grade B
2 tablespoons bourbon
2 tablespoons light brown sugar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons soy sauce
Pinch cayenne

Combine the ingredients in a small saucepan over medium heat, whisking to combine. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened and reduced by about one-third, about 10 minutes. Let cool. Brush on the chicken pieces during the last 10 minutes of grilling (see the headnote above). This glaze can be made ahead and kept refrigerated for days.

Cucumber-Grape Salsa

Yields about 1 1/2 cups; serves four.

This is a pretty mix—pale green with flecks of hot red chile. If you want a spicier salsa, include a few of the seeds from the chile.

3/4 cup diced seeded cucumber
3/4 cup halved seedless green grapes, roughly chopped
1/4 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves
1 fresh red serrano or jalapeño, cored, seeded, and very finely chopped
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt to taste

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl; stir. Serve immediately alongside or on top of grilled chicken, or cover and refrigerate for up to 8 hours.

Black Olive & Mint Vinaigrette

Yields 3/4 cup; enough for 1 chicken.

This sauce packs a bigger punch than most vinaigrettes. If you want to adapt it to a salad dressing, simply whisk in another few tablespoons of oil and serve it with sturdy greens. You can make this vinaigrette a day or two ahead and refrigerate it.

1 large orange
3 small sprigs fresh mint; plus 1 tablespoon chopped
1 small shallot, minced
1 1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon white-wine vinegar
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
12 kalamata olives, pitted and chopped
Kosher salt to taste

With a vegetable peeler, pare the zest from the orange, being careful to avoid the white pith underneath. Squeeze the juice from the orange into a small saucepan—don't worry if a few seeds fall into the pan. Add the zest and the mint sprigs. Bring to a quiet boil over medium heat and cook until reduced to about 2 tablespoons. Pour through a fine strainer into a medium bowl, pushing down on the solids to extract all the juice. Let cool.

Add the shallot, mustard, vinegar, and black pepper; whisk together until smooth. Gradually pour in the olive oil, whisking constantly as you pour; the sauce should thicken and emulsify as you go. Stir in the olives and chopped mint. Taste for pepper and salt—it may be salty enough from the olives. Spoon the vinaigrette over the chicken at the table.

Molly Stevens is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. ♦

Sweet Summer Corn Off the Cob

BY TASHA PRYSI

I ate a lot of corn as a kid. My dad, a dairy farmer in the Central Valley of California, grew corn for our cows, but he also grew a small amount of what my family called “people corn.” Growing up, my experience with “people corn” was always on the cob; I never thought of eating it any other way. Then came my first summer as a cook at Chez Panisse. We cut the kernels off the cob and added them to everything: breads, pastas, puddings, salads, soufflés. I was



Sweet Corn Relish with Avocado, Jalapeño & Cilantro

Serves four.

Spoon a generous amount of this relish on top of grilled fish or chicken breasts. Add a simple green salad and you'll have a delicious summer meal.

Kernels from 3 large ears corn (about 2½ cups)
1 small red onion (about 6 ounces), cut into ½-inch dice
½ fresh jalapeño, cored, seeded, and minced
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice; more to taste
1 teaspoon Champagne vinegar or white-wine vinegar
Kosher salt to taste
½ avocado, pit removed
⅓ cup chopped fresh cilantro
3 tablespoons olive oil

Bring a small pot of water to a boil. Add the corn kernels and blanch

for 1 minute. Drain and set aside.

In a medium bowl, combine the onion, jalapeño, lime juice, vinegar, and a generous pinch of salt.

Dice the avocado: Use a paring knife to carefully make ¼-inch thick slices through the flesh without piercing the skin. Rotate the avocado 90 degrees and slice again, to create ¼-inch squares. With the avocado in the palm of your hand, slide a large metal spoon between the skin and flesh and gently scoop out the squares.

Add the avocado pieces, corn kernels, and cilantro to the onion mixture. Add the olive oil and another pinch of salt and stir gently. Season to taste, adding more salt or lime juice as needed.

amazed at corn's versatility. These days, fresh summer corn shows up for breakfast, lunch, and dinner on my table. I fold it into pancakes, toss it in salads, blanch it, grill it, sauté it—I've tried it all.

New varieties stay sweeter for longer

I don't live on a dairy farm anymore, and the corn I eat no longer grows in the field behind my house, so acquiring fresh, sweet corn takes a little more skill and effort. Corn starts converting its sugars into starches immediately after it's picked, which is why wise cooks used to start a pot of water boiling before heading out to the field to harvest some ears. But thanks to modern hybrid corn varieties like Super Sweet and Sugary Enhanced, which lose their sweetness over days as opposed to minutes, those of us without our own corn patch can still enjoy sweet corn.

Farmers' markets and roadside stands are your best bet for finding fresh and delicious corn. There, you can look into the farmer's eyes and ask, "Exactly when was this corn picked?" Look for plump, green ears that have fresh-looking cuts at their stems and slightly sticky brown silk at the top. If the supermarket is your only option, you'll have to adopt a more hands-on approach: pull back the husks and inspect the kernels. They should be firm and shiny. (When in doubt, I've been known to take a small bite out of an ear or two as well—to the utter humiliation of those with me, but it definitely settles the matter.) When buying corn, there's only

one absolute rule: never buy shucked corn. This trick hides the evidence of old corn: dried cuts on the stems, lackluster husks, and wilting silk. Don't be fooled.

Once you've bought your prized ears of corn, store them in the refrigerator until you're ready to cook. Only then should you shuck the corn; the husks keep the corn from drying out. To cut the kernels off the cob, follow the photos below.

The key to cooking corn: be brief

One of my favorite ways to use fresh corn kernels is in a summer vegetable sauté, as in the classic succotash at right. And it works just as well in more simple sauté combinations, such as corn and squash, corn and red peppers, or corn and chanterelles—all of which benefit from a little diced onion, chopped garlic, and fresh herbs. Fresh corn kernels only need about two minutes to cook. Add them near the end of sautéing with a knob of butter or a drizzle of olive oil, and perhaps a splash of water to provide a little steam.

If I'm adding corn to dishes with little or no cooking time, such as salads, salsas, or pancakes, I usually blanch the kernels first for about a minute in unsalted boiling water. (Check out my corn pancake recipe at www.finecooking.com; click on "online extras.") Blanched corn is wonderful when tossed with slender green beans. Like so many simple corn dishes, it's a delicious companion to just about anything.

How to get fresh corn kernels off the cob



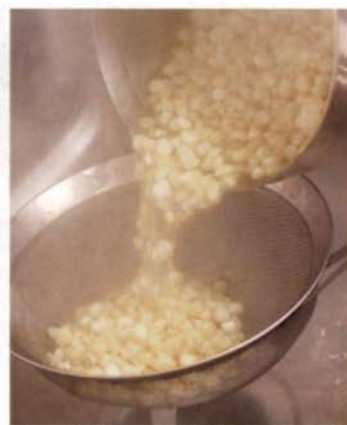
Shuck the corn, but leave the stem attached. Pull off the husk and rub off most of the silk by sliding your hand along the ear.



A dry towel helps remove any strands of silk that stick. Rub the ear briskly with the towel, using the stem as a handle.



To cut off the kernels, rest the ear firmly in a bowl or on a board—a towel under the cob keeps it from slipping—and cut from stem to tip. Don't cut the cob itself or you'll pick up tough, woody bits.



Briefly blanch the raw kernels for salads, salsas, or dishes with minimal cooking. Bring a small pot of unsalted water to a boil, add the kernels, cook for a minute, and drain.



Summer Succotash

Serves six.

You can use frozen baby lima beans, but try to find fresh summer shell beans, if possible. It's important to dice the other vegetables so they're all about the same size and shape. To avoid having to constantly refer to the recipe as you're cooking, it helps to line up the vegetables beside the stove in their order of cooking.

¼ pound shelled fresh lima beans, cranberry beans, or black-eyed peas, or thawed frozen baby lima beans

Kosher salt

2 cloves garlic, whole, plus 1 clove, finely chopped; omit the whole cloves if using frozen beans

½ small carrot, peeled; omit if using frozen beans

½ bay leaf; omit if using frozen beans

2 tablespoons plus ½ teaspoon olive oil
1 small red onion, cut into ¼-inch dice

⅛ teaspoon dried red chile flakes
1 red bell pepper, cut into ¼-inch dice
¼ pound green beans, cut into ¼-inch pieces
1 medium zucchini, cut into ¼-inch dice
Kernels from 2 large ears corn (about 1½ cups)
1 small ripe tomato, seeded and cut into ¼-inch dice
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 to 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

If using fresh beans, put them in a large pot, cover with water, and add a large pinch of salt, the 2 whole garlic cloves, carrot, and bay leaf. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook until the beans are tender, 20 to 30 minutes. Let the beans cool slowly in their broth.

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a deep 10-inch sauté pan or a large shallow pot over medium-high heat.

Add the onion, chile flakes, and a generous pinch of salt and cook until the onion is soft and has started to brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the bell pepper and cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Add the green beans; cook for 2 minutes. Push some of the ingredients aside to make room to sauté the garlic. Heat ½ teaspoon olive oil in this spot, add the finely chopped garlic, cook until you smell it, and then stir it into the vegetables. Add the zucchini and a pinch of salt to draw out some moisture and cook for 2 minutes. Add the corn; cook for 2 minutes. Drain the beans and add them to the pan; if using frozen beans, add them now. Add the tomato and cook until all the vegetables are perfectly tender, about 2 minutes. Stir in the butter, parsley, and basil and season with more salt, if necessary.



know how

Corn on the cob

Despite the many new ways I now cook with corn, my first love is still corn on the cob. At home, my mom serves it as a separate course, almost like dessert. Her method for cooking several (at least ten) ears of corn is imprecise but always perfect: Bring a pot of water to a boil as you're cooking dinner. Just as you're sitting down to eat, drop the corn in the water and turn off the heat. Once you've finished the main course, clear the table and pull the hot corn out of the pot and onto a platter. Then return to the table for the "corn course." (Try it. Corn on the cob is even better when there's nothing else on your plate to distract you.) This works because the temperature of the water drops significantly when so many ears are added at once, so the corn doesn't overcook.

If you're only cooking a few ears, use the traditional method: cook the corn in rapidly boiling water for no more than two minutes. With either method, the water should be unsalted, as salted water tends to make the kernels tough.

As for seasonings, sweet butter and salt are still my favorite, but for a little something different, I make an herb butter or a simple spiced salt. Here's how:

HERB BUTTER

Chop up 1 or 2 tablespoons chives, chervil, basil, cilantro, or thyme. Mash them into half a stick of room-temperature unsalted butter along with a pinch of salt.

SPICED SALT

Mix 1 tablespoon fine sea salt with ⅛ teaspoon cayenne (and ⅛ teaspoon ground cumin seeds, if you like). Serve the corn with the salt and lime wedges.

Corn Soufflé Puddings

Serves six.

The idea for a soufflé pudding—a sunken soufflé, unmolded and reheated in a puddle of cream—came from the late, great Richard Olney, a cookbook author and a superb cook. These have a delicate chive flavor, but you could also use thyme, summer savory, or basil. Soufflé puddings are a perfect appetizer or side dish for entertaining, as they can be made a day ahead and reheated just before serving.

1 cup milk
2 cups corn kernels
(from about 3 ears)
¼ cup unsalted butter;
more for the ramekins
¼ cup all-purpose flour
3 large eggs, separated
1 teaspoon coarse salt
2 or 3 grinds black
pepper
1 tablespoon sliced
fresh chives
½ cup heavy cream

Put the milk and 1¼ cups of the corn kernels in a blender. Blend until puréed. Strain the purée through a medium-fine sieve, using a rubber spatula to push through as much pulp as possible; you'll have about 1½ cups purée.

In a heavy-based saucepan, melt the butter over low heat. Whisk in the flour and cook for a minute, still whisking. Slowly whisk in the corn purée and whisk over medium-low heat until the mixture becomes as thick as pudding, 3 to 5 minutes. Pour into a large bowl and let cool to room temperature.

Heat the oven to 400°F. Generously butter six 6-ounce ramekins.

When the soufflé base is cool, stir in the egg yolks, the remaining ¾ cup corn kernels, salt, pepper, and chives. In a clean, dry bowl, beat the egg whites until they form soft peaks. Working quickly, use a rubber spatula to gently stir half of the whites into the soufflé base and then fold in the rest (see p. 71 for more on folding). Fill the ramekins just over three-quarters full and set them in a baking dish large enough to hold all the ramekins. Pour enough hot water into the baking dish to come halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake the puddings until they're puffed, set, and golden brown, about 30 minutes; rotate the pan once during baking.

Remove the puddings from the baking dish and let cool for about 15 minutes. Unmold the puddings by sliding a knife around the edge of each ramekin and gently inverting the pudding into the palm of your hand. Set the puddings browned side up in an oval gratin dish; they should be close but not touching. (For a more elegant presentation, you can put them in individual gratin dishes.) If you're not serving them right away, cover lightly with plastic and refrigerate for up to a day.

When ready to serve, heat the oven to 400°F. Pour the heavy cream over and around the puddings and heat them in the oven until the cream bubbles and the puddings repuff slightly, about 10 minutes.



A showy corn appetizer puffs like a soufflé



A hot water bath bakes the soufflés evenly. They're done when they're puffed, set, and golden brown.



They deflate as they sit, which is fine. Once they've cooled, slide a knife around the edge of each ramekin to loosen the soufflé.

Bread Salad with Corn, Cherry Tomatoes & Basil

Serves four to six.

Stale bread is traditional for bread salad, but here I use fresh bread that's toasted in a hot oven. The outside gets crisp; the inside stays slightly chewy. Juicy tomatoes are key; if you can't find cherry ones, use beefsteak tomatoes. Grape tomatoes aren't juicy enough for this salad. If your corn is exceptionally sweet and tender, you can skip the blanching step.

1 shallot, lobes separated and cut lengthwise into very thin slices
1 small clove garlic
Kosher salt to taste
2 tablespoons red-wine vinegar; more to taste
½ cup packed fresh basil leaves
½ loaf (8 ounces) rustic French or Italian peasant bread (choose a firm, chewy loaf, not an airy one), crusts trimmed and bread cut or torn into rough ½- to ¾-inch cubes

½ cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 cups corn kernels (from 4 to 6 ears)
12 ounces juicy cherry tomatoes, cut in half and lightly salted, or 2 small beefsteak tomatoes, cut into large dice and salted
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

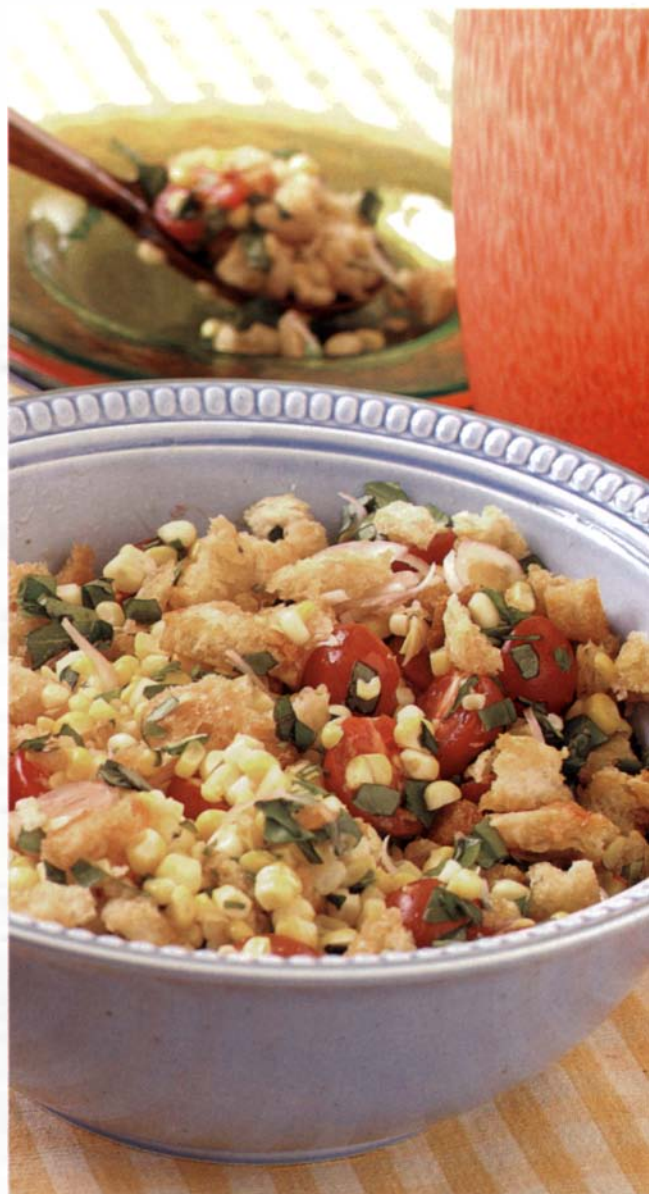
Heat the oven to 400°F. Put the shallot slices in a small bowl filled with ice water. Using a mortar and pestle or the flat side of a chef's knife, mash the garlic to a paste with a pinch of salt. Put the paste in a small bowl (or keep it in the mortar, if using) and whisk in the vinegar. Bruise two of the basil leaves with the back of a knife to release some of their flavor. Add the leaves to the garlic.

Put the bread cubes on a baking sheet and toss with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Bake until the cubes are crisp and

light golden brown outside but still soft inside, about 10 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Bring a small pot of water to a boil. Add the corn kernels and blanch for 1 minute. Drain and set aside.

Remove the two basil leaves from the garlic mixture and discard. Whisk the remaining ½ cup olive oil into the vinegar mixture. Drain the shallots. Put the corn kernels, shallots, and tomatoes in a large bowl. Season to taste with salt. Add the bread and toss with the vinaigrette. Taste again and season with salt and pepper. Let sit for at least 15 minutes but no longer than 30 minutes to let the bread absorb the juices. Taste again and, if needed, season with more salt, pepper, and vinegar. Just before serving, roughly chop the remaining basil and toss it with the salad.



Tasha Prysi, formerly a cook at Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California, teaches and writes about cooking. ♦



The sunken, cooled soufflés should fall right out. Set them right side up in one large gratin dish or in six small ones.



These soufflé puddings will hold for a day in the fridge. Just before serving, pour on a little heavy cream and bake just long enough to let them puff slightly again.

3 ways to make Potato Salad

Jazz up this summertime classic with a creamy dill dressing, a warm bacon vinaigrette, or a gentle toss with corn and tomatoes

COMPILED BY TONY ROSENFELD

A good potato salad holds a safe, familiar place on a summer buffet table. Its standard composition—earthy potatoes coated with a sharp dressing and seasonal vegetables—is reassurance enough that you're not going to go hungry. Subpar potato salads, on the other hand, are always disappointing; soggy potatoes, gloppy dressings, and a lack of oomph are problems with which we're all too familiar.

With visions of both good and bad potato salads in mind, we asked several *Fine Cooking* contributors to share their favorite versions, knowing that we'd learn a few good tricks along the way.

Molly Stevens makes a light, refreshing version of a creamy potato salad. She gently boils waxy potatoes in their jackets so they won't become waterlogged, lets them cool, cuts them up, and then adds delicate summer flavors in the form of celery, thinly sliced radishes, and fresh dill. To make the dressing, Molly whisks heavy cream until it's frothy and then incorporates mayonnaise, mustard, and lemon zest for some added punch. The frothy cream is the trick to a lighter-textured version of a traditional potato salad, and it allows the dressing to loosely coat—not saturate—the potatoes.

David Page and Barbara Shinn like to dress their roasted potato salad with a warm vinaigrette. They suggest that combining the ingredients when they're hot is the best way to have the potatoes drink up the dressing. While they're roasting Yukon Gold potatoes just until they color slightly, David and Barbara make a warm vinaigrette by sautéing bacon and onions and then adding cider vinegar and apples. They fold the hot potatoes into the warm vinaigrette until the flavors are thoroughly married.

To make the best use of summer vegetables, Sam Hayward features fresh herbs, corn, and tomatoes in his potato salad. Sam starts with high-quality boiling potatoes, which he gently simmers and then pairs with a summery mix of fresh corn, fresh herbs, and a warm vinaigrette of peanut oil, red onion, and cider vinegar. After cooling the mixture, he adds seeded and skinned tomatoes, gives a gentle toss, and serves. Like David and Barbara, he prefers to mix the ingredients together when they're hot for the best flavor; however, Sam cools the salad in the refrigerator before serving to preserve the potatoes' firm texture and make it a refreshing dish.

For information on the best potato varieties to use in salads, see *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 70.



Froth the cream for a dressing with a lighter texture



Creamy Potato Salad with Radishes, Lemon & Dill

Serves six; yields about 6 cups.

In the course of co-writing a cookbook devoted to potatoes, I've made more than a few versions of potato salads over the last couple of years. But when it comes to making potato salad for myself and my friends, this simple rendition is one of my all-time favorites.

2 pounds unpeeled smallish red potatoes, scrubbed
Kosher salt
2 inner ribs celery and their tender leaves, finely chopped (about ½ cup)
¾ cup thinly sliced radishes (about 6 small radishes)
3 scallions (white and tender green parts), chopped
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
¼ cup heavy cream, well chilled
½ cup mayonnaise
1½ teaspoons Dijon mustard
1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
Freshly ground pepper (black or white)

Put the potatoes in a medium saucepan, cover with water by an inch or two, add a large pinch of salt, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium, partially cover, and cook until the potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Test for doneness by spearing a potato with a thin metal skewer. It should penetrate easily into the center of the potato and then slide right out. If the skewer lifts the potato out of the pot when you withdraw it, continue cooking a little longer. Drain the potatoes and let them cool. You can drain them on a cooling rack set over or in your sink, which will avoid squashing the tender potatoes (as often happens with a colander) and also lets the potatoes cool quickly.

When the potatoes are at room temperature, cut them into ¾-inch chunks and put them in a mixing bowl. Add the celery, radishes, scallions, and dill and fold gently to distribute; set aside.

In a small bowl, whisk the cream until frothy but not at all stiffened. Whisk in the mayonnaise and mustard. Add the lemon juice, zest, ½ teaspoon salt, and pepper to taste. Pour the dressing over the salad and fold it in with a rubber spatula. Taste for seasoning. Serve, or cover and chill for up to a day.

(More recipes follow)



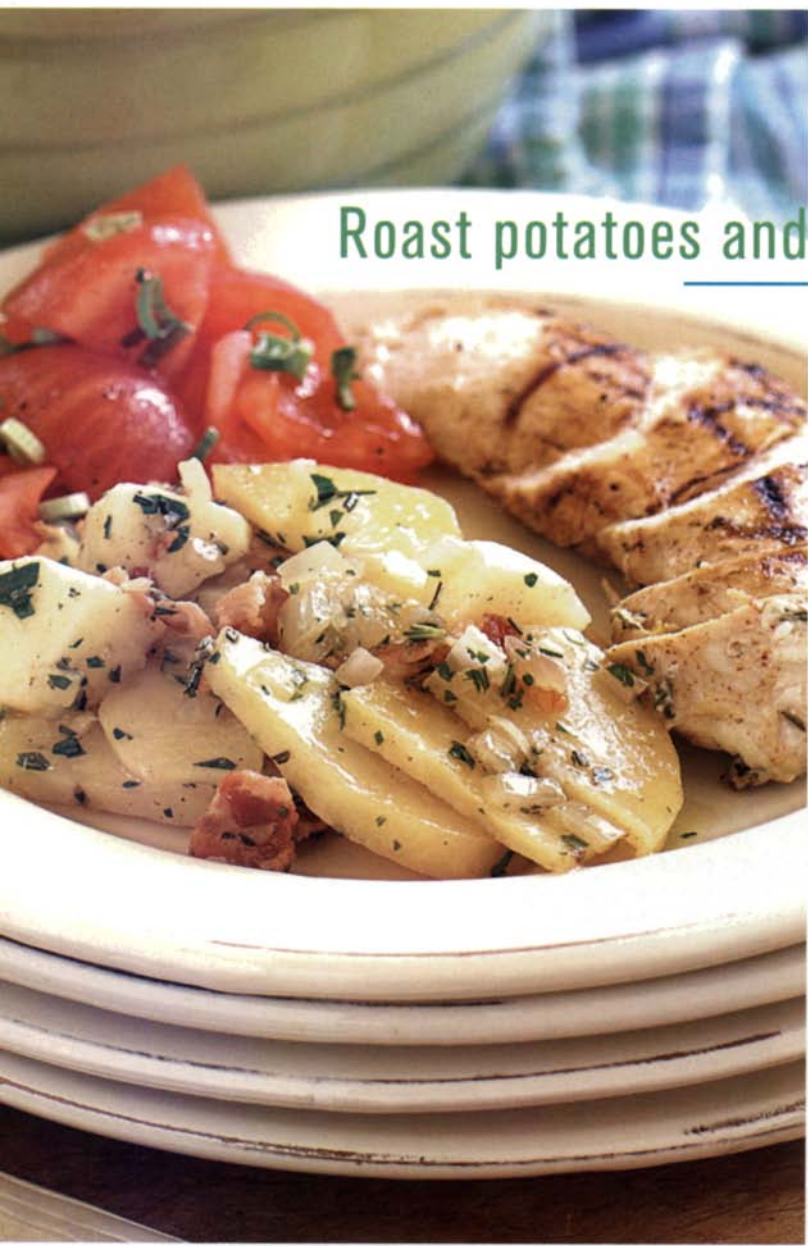
Molly Stevens is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking and a co-author of One Potato, Two Potato.



Whisk the cream until it's frothy; this makes the mayonnaise dressing feel light and creamy.



Use a skewer to check for doneness. If the skewer lifts the potato out of the water, the potatoes need to cook a little longer.



Roast potatoes and sauté bacon for a warm salad

Warm Potato Salad with Bacon, Apples & Rosemary

Serves six; yields about 5 cups.

On the cool evenings of early and late summer, we like to serve this salad to stave off the chill. Our favorite accompaniments are seared chicken breasts, roasted pork loin, and ham.

1½ pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, halved lengthwise, and sliced into ½-inch half moons

¼ cup olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 thick or 4 regular slices bacon, cut into ½-inch pieces

½ cup diced yellow onion (¼-inch dice)

⅓ cup apple-cider vinegar (5% acidity)

1 sweet-tart apple (like Gala), peeled, cored, and cut into ¾-inch dice

1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1½ teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary

Heat the oven to 400°F. Put the potatoes in a large bowl and drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the oil. Season well with salt and pepper and toss. Spread the potatoes on a large baking sheet and roast until they're slightly brown and easily pierced with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the bacon and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon bits to a paper towel to drain. Add the onion to the pan, season with salt and pepper, and cook until the onion is softened, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the vinegar, mix well, and then add the cooked potatoes, apple, bacon, parsley, and rosemary. Gently fold everything together until evenly coated. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately.



David Page and Barbara Shinn are co-owners of Home restaurant in New York City, where David is the chef. They're the authors of Recipes from Home.



Combine roasted potatoes and a sautéed bacon dressing. Fold the potatoes into the dressing until they're evenly coated.



Sam Hayward is the chef and co-owner of Fore Street Restaurant in Portland, Maine.

Chill the warm potato mixture before adding the tomatoes

Potato, Corn & Tomato Salad with Fresh Herbs

Serves six to eight; yields 8 cups.

The pairings in this salad match the short but bountiful summers of Maine, where I live. I like to serve this salad on a bed of arugula along with slices of grilled focaccia.

For my favorite apple-cider vinegar, see *Where to Buy It*, p. 80.

2 pounds unpeeled firm boiling potatoes, brushed and trimmed of any blemishes

Kosher salt

¾ cup peanut or grapeseed oil

¼ cup finely chopped red onion

4 ears very fresh corn, shucked

¼ cup finely sliced fresh chives

½ teaspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary

2 teaspoons fine sea salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup high-quality apple-cider vinegar (I use Bragg Organic Apple Cider Vinegar, an aromatic, unfiltered vinegar)

3 large firm but ripe tomatoes

Put the potatoes in a large pot of cold water, salt well (about 1 tablespoon per gallon), and set over high heat. Once the water reaches a boil, reduce the heat to a low simmer, cover, and cook the potatoes until they're just tender (test by piercing them with a thin skewer), 25 to 35 minutes, depending on size. Scoop the potatoes from the water and transfer to a cutting board; don't drain the water.

Meanwhile, when the potatoes are almost cooked, heat the oil over medium heat in a small, non-reactive skillet. Add the onion and simmer long enough to tenderize it and mellow its flavor, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

Bring the potato water back to a boil over high heat, add the corn, and boil until just tender, 2 to 4 minutes. Transfer the corn to the cutting board; again, don't drain the water.

While the corn cooks, hold the potatoes with tongs or a clean

towel, quickly cut them into ½-inch dice, and put them in a large bowl. Sprinkle on the herbs, salt, pepper, cider vinegar, and the warm onion and oil; gently fold together. Cut the kernels from the corn cobs and fold them into the potatoes. Transfer the salad to a serving platter and refrigerate it until cool, about 1 hour.

Return the water to a boil and fill a bowl with ice water. Cut out the stems of the tomatoes and cut a shallow "x" in the base of each (this helps with peeling). Blanch the tomatoes in the boiling water until the skins begin to loosen, about 30 seconds. Immediately drop the tomatoes into the ice water to stop the cooking. Drain the tomatoes, peel them, cut them in half crosswise, and gently scoop out most of the juice and seeds. Cut the tomatoes into ½-inch pieces, cover, and set aside at room temperature.

To serve, transfer the salad to a shallow bowl; add the tomatoes. Toss gently, taste and adjust the seasonings if needed, and serve. ♦



Score and then blanch the tomatoes in the boiling potato water. After cooling in an ice bath, the tomato skins peel off easily.

Peppermint Brownies

A fudgy texture and
a double dose of mint
make this brownie a
cool summertime treat

BY GREG CASE



I'm not ashamed to admit that these brownies were inspired by everybody's favorite Girl Scout cookie, the Thin Mint. As a kid, I loved those cookies and just about any combination of chocolate and mint, York Peppermint Patties included. I've spent a lot of time since then working on this brownie, perfecting its rich, fudgy texture and cool peppermint essence.

A double hit of mint comes from two sources. While developing recipes over the years, I've found that I get more layers of flavor when I use more than one form of an ingredient in a recipe. Different forms of an ingredient hit different points on the palate. For this reason, I layer the mint flavor in these brownies by using both peppermint tea leaves and peppermint extract.

Years ago, I began experimenting with the leaves from mint tea bags on a whim and found that they gave off a strong, even flavor. But the cool, minty sensation I love was absent. Further testing revealed that the missing tingle comes from peppermint extract.

To incorporate the peppermint tea leaves, I grind them together with the sugar in a food processor. This refines the coarse texture of the tea leaves and ensures that they're evenly distributed in the brownie batter, so the flavor is more consistent. The processing also makes the sugar finer, which helps make the brownies smooth and chewy.

I wanted these brownies to have a really dense, fudgy texture, so I decided not to use any leavens. I also added something that I normally wouldn't: white chocolate—but just in the glaze. It serves a purpose. I needed to distinguish the peppermint brownies from the plain ones in my bakery case, and the bit of white suggests the flavor of the peppermint within.

It doesn't require much skill to swirl the white and dark chocolates, but it looks great: just drizzle the white chocolate over the dark and use a toothpick to create a pretty pattern.

Drizzle and drag to create a marbled glaze



Smooth the chocolate glaze in an even layer to the edges. It's fine if some runs over the sides.



Slowly drizzle a stream of white chocolate in an inexact but evenly distributed pattern.



Drag a thin skewer or a toothpick through the glazes in alternating directions to create a marbled look.

Peppermint Brownies

Yields about 30 brownies.

These brownies only get better after a couple of days, as their texture gets fudgier and their flavor richer. In testing, we used Bigelow peppermint tea, but any herbal peppermint tea will work. Peppermint extract is available in grocery stores or by mail order (for sources, see p. 80).

10 ounces (2½ sticks) unsalted butter; more for greasing the pan
10 ounces unsweetened chocolate
2 teaspoons peppermint tea leaves (from about 2 tea bags)
2 cups granulated sugar
4 large eggs
2 teaspoons peppermint extract
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
4½ ounces (1 cup) all-purpose flour
2 ounces semisweet chocolate
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
2 ounces white chocolate

Center a rack in the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Butter the bottom and sides of a 9x13-inch baking pan, line it with parchment (the paper should extend at least an inch above the long sides to act as handles for getting the brownies out), and butter the paper.

Put about 2 inches of water in a small pot and heat to a gentle simmer. In a heatproof bowl set over the water, melt 8 ounces of the butter and 8 ounces of the unsweetened chocolate. Be sure that the water is hot but not boiling and that it doesn't touch the bottom of the bowl. Stir occasionally with a heatproof spatula until the mixture is completely melted and uniform, 6 to 7 minutes. Turn off the heat, but leave the bowl over the water.

In a food processor, finely grind the peppermint leaves with the sugar. In a medium bowl, whisk together the

eggs, peppermint extract, salt, and peppermint sugar until just combined. Whisk in the melted chocolate mixture (reserve the pot of water for later). Slowly add the flour, gently folding it in with a spatula, until incorporated. Spread the batter into the prepared pan and bake until a pick inserted into the center comes out almost clean (a few bits of batter should cling to the pick), 35 to 40 minutes. Put the pan on a rack to cool to room temperature, about 2 hours. Lift the paper lining to pull the brownies out of the pan. Peel the paper off the brownies and put them on a cutting board.

To make the glaze, bring the pot of water back to a gentle simmer. Set a heatproof bowl over the pot and add the semisweet chocolate, corn syrup, and the remaining 2 ounces each butter and unsweetened chocolate. Stir frequently with a heatproof spatula until the mixture is melted and smooth; set aside. Put the white chocolate in a separate heatproof bowl and set it over the water. Stir frequently until it's melted and smooth; remove it from the heat.

Spread the chocolate glaze over the cooled brownies in an even layer using a spatula. Drizzle the white chocolate over the glaze in lines. Use a toothpick or a wooden skewer to drag the white chocolate into the glaze (as shown in the photo at left). Lift the cutting board and firmly tap it on the counter to settle the glaze.

Refrigerate until the glaze is set, at least 20 minutes and up to 12 hours. Cut into thirty bars, about 2 inches square (a knife rinsed in hot water and then dried will cut more cleanly than a cold knife). Keep well covered and serve at room temperature.

Greg Case is the chef-owner of the G. Case Baking Company in Somerville, Massachusetts. ♦



These soups have no thickeners and no cream, which makes them light-bodied and intensely flavorful

BY EVE FELDER

For a dressy look and contrasting flavors, garnishes are key. From the top: summer squash soup with yogurt raita and cilantro; eggplant soup with tomato relish; and puréed corn soup with red pepper coulis and basil.



Velvety Soups

from Garden Vegetables

When summer is in full swing and the markets are loaded with good-looking vegetables, I'm never at a loss for what to do with them. Gratins, sautés, salads, grilled vegetables with aioli—these are my summer standbys. But after a while, I start to crave something just a little bit off the beaten track, and that's when my thoughts turn to puréed vegetable soups—nothing captures the essence of a season better. Creamy, smooth, and full of flavor, puréed soups go down easy on a warm day. They're a perfect first course for company. Just top with a tomato relish, a yogurt drizzle, or a swirl of olive oil or sour cream and you're set to go.

If you've made puréed vegetable soups before, you've probably enriched them with cream and thickened them with potato, rice, or flour. This is where I break with tradition. I omit these in favor of a soup that's perhaps slightly lighter in body but that has a more pure and intense flavor and is no less smooth.

Here are the five basic steps to making delicious puréed soups

You'll find recipes for corn, summer squash, and eggplant soups on pp. 52–53, but the following technique works with many other vegetables, such as artichokes, broccoli, carrots, green beans, spinach, Swiss chard, and winter squash.

1. Make a fifteen-minute broth with tender fresh herbs. I use a generous handful of delicate herbs like basil or cilantro or flavorful parsley stems, which willingly surrender their flavors and aromas to a boiling pot of water or chicken broth. I might also add a few thyme sprigs, a bay leaf, a garlic clove, or any aromatic ingredient that I suspect would give the soup a pleasing, complementary

backdrop of flavor (for a corn soup, I'll toss in the corn cobs once I've cut off the kernels). A mere fifteen minutes of simmering might seem like it would make a weak broth, but you'll be surprised how quickly you can extract flavor from these ingredients, especially those tender herbs.

While the broth is simmering, start cooking onions in a saucepan with butter or olive oil. Usually, I cook the onions just long enough to soften them and draw out their juices—a technique that's called sweating—though sometimes I cook them longer to get the deeper flavor from browning. Along with the onions, I might add aromatic flavorings like ginger, chile, or spices. Add minced garlic only after the onions are cooked so that it doesn't burn.

2. Cook the vegetable, either separately or in the broth. I'll roast eggplant and I'll cook summer squash briefly with the sweated onions, but I usually just add corn kernels straight to the broth. It depends in part on the vegetable and in part on my mood. You could also grill the vegetable for a suggestion of smokiness in the soup. Whether it's raw or completely cooked ahead, the vegetable always needs at least a few minutes of simmering with the herb broth to let the flavors merge.

3. Blend the vegetables in batches to get a smooth purée. I find that a blender is more effective than a food processor for shredding vegetable fibers and getting a more emulsified purée (see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 70, for more on puréeing equipment). An



Fresh herbs provide an aromatic backbone. Simmer a few sprigs of herbs like basil, parsley, thyme, or cilantro in water or chicken broth to fully release their flavors.

Purée in a blender and strain out fibers



LADLE about 1 cup of vegetables and about half as much broth into a blender. Summer squash and other watery vegetables might not need any added broth. Cover, but remove the center cap or keep the lid slightly cracked with the opening away from you. Cover the lid with a folded dishtowel.

PUREE in batches. Blend in pulses or on low speed at first, and then continuously until you have a completely smooth purée, adding more broth only if needed. With the blender on, carefully ladle in more vegetables and broth through the feeder hole, keeping the ratio about the same, until the blender is half full.

STRAIN the purée through a fine sieve set over a bowl, pressing it through with a rubber spatula. Purée and strain the remaining vegetables, including any spices. Thin the soup, if necessary, so it has the consistency of heavy cream (you may not use all the broth). Continue as the recipe directs.

important safety precaution for puréeing hot vegetables is to remove the center cap or crack the lid slightly, and then lay a towel on top before starting to blend. This prevents a sudden burst of air pressure from pushing the lid off and spewing hot liquid. Also, start with a small amount of vegetables and blend in pulses or on a low speed at first. Once the vegetables in the blender are liquefied, you can ladle in more vegetables through the feeder cap with the blender running.

Since I don't add any thickener to these soups, it falls to the vegetable itself to supply a sense of fullness and body. You need some broth in the blender to purée the vegetables, but don't add more than what's necessary; watery vegetables like zucchini won't need any added broth at all. You can always add more broth later if the soup is too thick, but if you add too much too soon, you're stuck.

4. Push the purée through a fine sieve for a satiny texture. Straining out tiny vegetable

fibers takes the soup from pleasantly smooth to elegantly silky. Without any cream to gloss over the rough spots, these soups really benefit from the sieving. (For sieve sources, see *Where to Find It*, p. 80.)

5. Stir in garnishes for a visual lift. An unadorned bowl of puréed soup has a simple if understated beauty, but that doesn't keep me from dressing it up and adding another layer of flavor at the same time. Little touches play big. Try a spoonful of sour cream, crème fraîche, or yogurt for a cooltang, a drizzle of fruity or peppery extra-virgin olive oil for richness, or a handful of homemade croutons for contrasting texture. For a bigger flavor impact, make the roasted red pepper coulis, raita, or tomato relish in the recipes here.

Puréed vegetable soups will hold up for a few days in the refrigerator, but they sometimes separate. To bring them back together, whisk them vigorously or use an immersion blender.



Puréed Summer Squash Soup with Raita

Serves four; yields ½ cup raita.

FOR THE RAITA:

½ cup whole-milk yogurt
¼ teaspoon kosher salt; more to taste
1 teaspoon vegetable oil
½ teaspoon brown mustard seeds
¼ teaspoon cumin seeds
½ teaspoon onion seeds (optional)

FOR THE SOUP:

12 sprigs fresh cilantro with roots, if possible (1 packed cup); more leaves for garnish
1 small head garlic, cut across the equator; plus 1 tablespoon minced garlic
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 large onion, sliced (to yield 1½ cups)
2 teaspoons kosher salt; more to taste
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
2 tablespoons minced jalapeño
½ teaspoon cumin seeds
½ teaspoon coriander seeds
⅛ teaspoon cardamom seeds or 1 green cardamom pod (optional)
1 pound zucchini or other summer squash (unpeeled), sliced ½-inch thick
¼ teaspoon fresh lime juice

Make the raita: In a bowl, combine the yogurt and salt. Heat the oil in a small pan over medium heat until it shimmers. Add the mustard seeds, cumin seeds, and onion seeds, if using. When they start to pop, add the oil and seeds to the yogurt. Stir, taste, and add salt, if needed.

Make the soup: Put the cilantro, halved garlic head, and 5 cups water in a large saucepan or a stockpot. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook uncovered for 15 minutes. Strain the broth.

Melt the butter in a large, heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, 2 teaspoons salt, ginger, jalapeño, cumin seeds, coriander seeds, and cardamom, if using. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent, about 10 minutes; don't let it brown. Stir in the 1 tablespoon minced garlic and the zucchini, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the squash is softened, about 5 minutes. Add 4 cups of the broth, bring to a simmer, and cook until the zucchini is tender, about another 3 minutes.

Following the photos at left, purée the mixture in a blender and strain it.

Add the lime juice; taste and add salt if needed. Serve warm, garnished with 1 to 2 tablespoons raita and the cilantro leaves.



Puréed Corn Soup with Roasted Red Pepper Coulis

Serves four; yields ½ cup coulis.

FOR THE COULIS:

- 1 small clove garlic**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt**
- 1 small red bell pepper, broiled until the skin is charred, peeled when cool, and seeded**
- 1½ teaspoons balsamic vinegar**
- ¼ teaspoon red-wine vinegar**
- ⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
- Pinch cayenne**
- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil**

FOR THE SOUP:

- 3 ears corn (to yield 2¼ cups kernels)**
- 8 sprigs fresh basil; more tiny leaves for garnish**
- 10 sprigs fresh thyme**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 1 medium onion, sliced (to yield 1 cup)**
- Kosher salt**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh garlic**

Make the red pepper coulis:

Mash the garlic with ¼ teaspoon salt in a mortar and pestle or with the side of a chef's knife to a fine paste. Put the garlic paste, the red pepper, ¼ teaspoon salt, the balsamic vinegar, red-wine vinegar, black pepper, cayenne, and olive oil in a blender. Blend on high speed to a smooth purée.

Make the soup: Shuck the corn and rub off the silk. Stand one ear on a board or in a shallow bowl and with a knife, slice straight down the ear to remove the kernels. Turn the ear and repeat until all the kernels are removed. Scrape the dull side of the knife down the cob to extract the corn "milk."

Put the cobs (broken in half, if necessary), the herbs, and 5 cups water in a large saucepan or a stockpot. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook uncovered for 15 minutes. Remove the cobs and strain the broth.

Melt the butter in a large, heavy saucepan set over medium heat. Add the onion and 2 teaspoons salt, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes; don't let it brown. Stir in the garlic and 2¼ cups corn kernels with the "milk." Add enough of the herb broth to cover the corn, bring to a simmer, and cook until the corn is very tender, 17 to 20 minutes.

Following the photos at left, purée the corn in a blender and strain it.

Taste the soup and add salt, if necessary. Serve warm, garnished with a swirl of the red pepper coulis and several tiny basil leaves.



Puréed Eggplant Soup with Tomato Relish

Serves four; yields ¾ cup relish.

FOR THE SOUP:

- 4 tablespoons olive oil**
- 1 pound eggplant (1 medium eggplant), sliced in half lengthwise**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 5 cups homemade or low-salt canned chicken broth**
- 8 large sprigs fresh basil**
- 12 stems fresh parsley**
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme**
- 1 large onion, sliced (to yield 1½ cups)**
- 1½ tablespoons minced fresh garlic**

FOR THE RELISH:

- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil; more for garnish**
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh garlic**
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- 1 medium-size ripe tomato, peeled, seeded, and cut into small dice**
- ½ teaspoon sherry vinegar**
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**

Make the soup: Heat the oven to 375°F. Spread 2 tablespoons of the oil on a rimmed baking sheet. Season the cut side of the eggplant with salt and pepper and put the halves face down on the pan. Roast until tender, about 40 minutes; a knife will enter the flesh easily. When the eggplant is cool enough to handle, scrape

out the flesh with a spoon. Discard the skin.

Meanwhile, put the chicken broth, basil, parsley stems, and thyme in a large saucepan or a stockpot. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer uncovered for 15 minutes. Strain the broth.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large, heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring frequently, until golden and caramelized, about 20 minutes. Stir in ¾ teaspoon salt and the garlic. Add 4 cups of the stock, bring to a boil, add the eggplant flesh, reduce to a simmer, and cook for 5 minutes.

Following the photos at left, purée the eggplant in a blender and strain it.

Make the relish: In a small pan, combine the oil, garlic, and salt. Heat over low until the garlic is tender but not colored, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the tomato and cook just until warm, about 2 minutes. Stir in the sherry vinegar, pepper, and parsley. Remove from the heat and serve within a few hours.

Taste the soup and add salt if needed. Serve warm, garnished with the relish and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil.

Eve Felder is the associate dean for advanced cooking at The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. ♦

Perfect Iced Tea

A large, clear glass pitcher is filled with a deep amber-colored iced tea. The pitcher is packed with numerous ice cubes, some of which are partially submerged in the liquid. The pitcher has a simple, elegant design with a handle on the right side. The background is a plain, light color, making the pitcher and its contents the central focus of the image.

BY FRED THOMPSON

Growing up in the South, I learned that the ritual of making “ice” tea (there was no such thing as “iced” tea in North Carolina) was an honored one. I discovered early on that I could be a summertime hero by mastering the process of combining those simple-looking tea bags with water to make an intense, homemade brew.

Hot tea and iced tea are not the same. Many people make iced tea the same way they do hot tea. This method fails to acknowledge that hot and cold temperatures create entirely different flavors. Cold dampens flavor, so it's imperative to brew iced tea to a stronger level than you would hot tea.

I prefer to make a concentrate of tea using a couple of cups of water and six tea bags. After steeping this mixture, I add six cups of cold water. Making a concentrate results in a more flavorful final product and lets you control the strength of the tea. You can adjust the flavor as you add more water.

To maximize flavor, my method uses more tea bags

and a longer steeping time—15 minutes—than what most tea companies suggest. I'm careful not to let the tea bags sit in the water too long, though, as tea—like wine—has tannins, and over-steeping allows these tannins to come to the fore and cause bitterness. If you want to make a stronger brew, add more tea bags instead of lengthening the steeping time. For a weaker tea, however, shorten the steeping time by a couple of minutes, but keep the number of tea bags the same.

Be sure to let the tea cool at room temperature. Putting hot tea directly in the refrigerator will make it turn cloudy. To clear cloudy tea, try adding a little boiling water.

Basic Iced Tea

Yields about 2 quarts.

I like to use orange pekoe tea and spring, filtered, or distilled water for this straightforward brew. If you like your iced tea southern style and quite sweet, add 1½ cups granulated sugar.

2¼ cups water

6 regular-size tea bags (about ½ ounce total), or 2 family-size tea bags

6 cups cold water

**Granulated sugar for garnish
Lemon wedges for garnish
Mint sprigs for garnish**

In a small saucepan, bring the 2¼ cups water to a gentle boil. Add the tea bags, remove the saucepan from the heat, and cover. Steep for 15 minutes.

Remove the tea bags without squeezing them (which would add bitterness) and pour the steeped tea into a 2½-quart heatproof container (like a large Pyrex liquid measure). Add the 6 cups cold water and mix. Let cool at room temperature and then refrigerate until cold. Serve over ice, garnished with sugar, lemon wedges, and mint sprigs.

Strawberry-Mint Tea Sparkling Punch

Yields about 3½ quarts, roughly twenty 5-ounce punch-cup servings or 12 cocktail-size servings.

The beauty of serving this punch by the glass is that you can make a special concoction for each guest. Children will enjoy this tea with lemon-lime soda, and adults might like a splash of Champagne or an American sparkling wine.

- 2 pints fresh strawberries** (about 1 pound), cleaned, hulled, and halved
- 2 tablespoons plus ½ cup granulated sugar**
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**
- ⅓ teaspoon (or a good pinch) kosher salt**
- 2¼ cups water**
- 6 regular-size mint tea bags** (real tea with mint, not herbal tea), about ½ ounce total
- 6 cups cold water**
- 1 liter (33.8 ounces) sparkling water, chilled**
- Mint sprigs for garnish (optional)**
- Whole fresh strawberries for garnish (optional)**

Put the strawberries, 2 tablespoons of the sugar, the lemon juice, and the salt in a food processor or blender. Process until it's a smooth purée, pour it into a container, and refrigerate until needed.

In a small saucepan, bring the 2¼ cups water to a gentle boil. Add the tea bags, remove from the heat, cover, and steep for 15 minutes.

Pour the remaining ½ cup sugar into a 3-quart heatproof container (like a large Pyrex

liquid measure). Remove the tea bags when they're finished steeping (don't squeeze them) and pour the tea over the sugar, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Add the 6 cups cold water and stir again. Chill until cold.

To serve, combine the strawberry purée with the mint tea and stir well to mix completely.

If serving in a punch bowl, put the strawberry-mint tea in the punch bowl and slowly add the sparkling water.

For individual servings, fill 10-ounce stemmed glasses (wineglasses work great) two-thirds of the way with the tea and top off with the sparkling water. Garnish with mint sprigs and a strawberry, if you like.

Spike iced tea with lively fruit juices—lime, lemon, pineapple, orange—or sparkling water, ginger ale, or alcohol (like whiskey, bourbon, vodka, rum, or gin) for a spirited party concoction.

Sour Mash & Lime Tea

Yields 2 quarts lime-tea mix, or 8 drinks.

This is my variation on a Southern Sour.

- 4 cups water**
- 6 regular-size tea bags** (about ½ ounce total)
- 1 cup granulated sugar**
- 1 can (6 ounces) frozen limeade concentrate, thawed**
- 3 cups cold water**
- 12 ounces sour-mash whiskey (such as Jack Daniels), or any good bourbon (about 1½ cups)**
- Lime wedges for garnish (optional)**

In a medium saucepan, bring the 4 cups water to a boil. Add the tea bags, remove from the heat, cover, and steep for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, put the sugar and limeade concentrate in a 2-quart heatproof container (like a large Pyrex liquid measure). When the tea is ready, remove the tea bags (don't squeeze them) and add the tea to the limeade mixture, stirring to combine. Stir in the 3 cups cold water, let cool to room temperature, and then refrigerate until ready to serve.

To serve, pour 1½ ounces of the whiskey into each 12-ounce glass. Add 1 cup of the limeade-tea mixture to each glass. Stir to combine. Add ice and garnish with the lime wedges, if you like.

Fred Thompson is the author of Iced Tea and Lemonade (Harvard Common Press). ♦



An Easy



An irresistible introduction to Asian flavors, this satay menu offers vibrant fare—without complicated cooking.

Summer Satay Menu

Center this do-ahead menu around grilled skewers and a savory peanut sauce, with simple salads on the side

BY SU-MEI YU

For a summer grilling party, I think nothing is easier or more delicious than satay. Satay—marinated slivers of chicken, beef, or pork that are threaded onto skewers, quickly grilled, and eaten piping hot—is Indonesian by birth, but satay has made its way all over Southeast Asia, where people eat it almost anytime, from midday snack to midnight supper. Dipping sauces, cool, refreshing salads, and rice or grilled bread are the traditional accompaniments.

Part of what makes satay so easy is that there's much you can do ahead. I take my cue from a very successful street vendor I know in Bangkok who slices, marinates, and skewers her satay the night before. She makes her dipping sauces in advance, too; they last for several days. Once she sets up, all she has to do is slice her salads, wait for customers to arrive, and pop the satay on the grill. I encourage you to take this do-ahead approach, too.

There's no complex cooking required here, but a few details are key. Toasting and grinding your spices in a coffee grinder or a mortar and pestle helps flavors really pop, as does using dried chiles. Slicing the meat thinly means quick, even grilling. And tasting each condiment for a balance of tangy-spicy-sweet allows you to tweak the dishes to your liking.

A dessert of grilled fruit drizzled with coconut sauce completes this menu in easygoing summer style. The coconut sauce can be made days before, and the fruit can go on the coals as they're dying down. Now, all that's left is for you to relax and dig in.



"The simple dishes in this menu will teach you all about contrast and balance," says Su-Mei Yu.



drink choices

Try beer, light white wine, or even lemonade

You have several delicious options when it comes to choosing drinks for this satay menu. To keep things easy, stick with beverages that will work throughout the meal.

A traditional, crisp Thai beer such as Singha (\$7 for a six-pack) pairs well with the savory flavors of the satays, as does a light- to medium-bodied ale like Acme Pale Ale (\$7) from the North Coast Brewing Company in

California. For the wine drinkers at your table, look for a light, crisp white with a touch of sweetness. Sokol Blosser's Evolution (\$15), a delicious blend from Oregon, and the 2001 Martinborough Vineyards Riesling (\$18) from New Zealand both offer vibrant fruit, crisp acidity, and just the slightest trace of sweetness.

The tart-sweet flavors of lemonade or tea would comple-

ment the smoky-sweet elements of the satays beautifully. A sparkling fruit juice would be delicious, too, especially with the grilled fruit and coconut sauce. Gavioli sparkling fruit juices (\$5 for a wine-size bottle) come in green apple and summer fruit flavors.

Master sommelier Tim Gaiser is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking.



Beef, Pork, or Chicken Satay

Serves three to four; yields ½ cup marinade and 15 to 18 skewers.

If you're making the marinade for chicken only, omit the cumin. If you're making the marinade for pork only, include the cinnamon. Freezing the meat for 30 minutes makes it much easier to slice thinly.

FOR THE MARINADE:

- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 stalk lemongrass (hard outer leaves and green top removed), minced (see *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 70)
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds, toasted in a small dry skillet until fragrant, and then ground

- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds (for beef and pork only), toasted in a small dry skillet until fragrant, and then ground
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon (for pork only)

- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 tablespoons pineapple juice
- 2 tablespoons unsalted dry-roasted peanuts, finely chopped

FOR THE SATAY:

- 1 pound pork loin, beef sirloin, or boneless chicken breasts or thighs, or a mix
- 18 wooden skewers, soaked in water for 30 minutes and dried
- Vegetable oil spray

Make the marinade: Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and mix well (if working ahead, leave out the peanuts until ready to use). Seal and refrigerate. The marinade will keep for a couple of days.

Prepare the meat: Slice the meat across the grain as thinly as you can (a scant ⅛ inch is ideal). Transfer to a large zip-top bag (only one type of meat per bag) and add the marinade. Seal the bag and toss it back and forth to coat the meat well. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or, for best results, 8 hours. Light a medium-hot grill fire. While waiting for the grill to heat, remove the meat from the refrigerator. Thread a few slices of meat onto each skewer, bunching up the slices (see below), to cover about 5 inches of the skewer. Generously spray the meat with vegetable oil and put the skewers on the medium-hot grill, arranging several skewers close to one another. Flip and turn frequently until the surface is slightly charred and the meat feels firm when pressed with tongs. Grill as follows (times are approximate):

- ❖ pork: charcoal, 3 minutes; gas, 7 minutes
- ❖ medium-rare beef: charcoal, 3 minutes; gas, 6 minutes
- ❖ chicken breast: charcoal, 2 minutes; gas, 4 minutes
- ❖ chicken thighs: charcoal, 4 minutes; gas, 5 minutes

Transfer to a platter and serve hot.

Thread chicken, pork, or beef “accordion-style” onto wooden skewers



Thread the meat onto the skewers in an over-under manner.



Bunch up the meat accordion-style as you thread it and push it down the skewer.



Continue threading until you cover about 5 inches of the skewer.



Peanut Sauce

Yields about 1½ cups, enough for 1 pound of meat.

I've given a range for the spice, so if you like a mild amount of heat, start at the low end and work up from there. Pounding the paste in a large mortar and pestle will result in the most integrated sauce, but a food processor works, too.

- 10 to 15 dried chiles de árbol, seeded (or ½ to 1 teaspoon cayenne plus ¼ to ½ teaspoon dried red chile flakes)**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic**
- 1 medium shallot, minced**
- 1 stalk lemongrass (hard outer leaves, tough stem, and green tops removed), minced (to yield about ⅓ cup)**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger or galangal**
- 1 tablespoon red miso (optional)**
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- ½ cup creamy peanut butter**
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar**
- 1 to 2 tablespoons fish sauce**
- ⅓ cup hot water; more if needed**
- 2 to 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**

If using chiles de árbol, put them in a bowl, cover with boiling water, and let soften, about 30 minutes. Drain and mince.

Food processor method: Combine the salt, garlic, shallot, chiles (or cayenne and chile flakes), lemongrass, ginger (or galangal), red miso (if using), and vegetable oil, and purée until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and set aside, or store chilled in a sealed container (the paste will keep for a week). Finish following the instructions below.

Mortar and pestle method: Pound the salt and garlic with a pestle to a fine paste. One at a time, add the shallot, chiles (or cayenne and chile flakes), lemongrass, ginger (or galangal), and red miso (if using), adding each item only after the preceding one has been incorporated. Add the oil slowly, pounding to make a smooth emulsion. Transfer to a bowl or store as above. Finish following the instructions below.

Finish the sauce: Up to two days before serving, heat a large skillet briefly over high heat. Add the paste and stir-fry until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Reduce the heat to low; add the peanut butter, sugar, and fish sauce; blend well. Whisk in the hot water, a tablespoon at a time, until the sauce has the consistency of thick soup. Turn off the heat and add the lemon juice. The sauce will look separated; this is fine. Taste for a balance of salty-sweet-tangy and correct the seasonings if you like. (To reheat, warm in a saucepan over low; add lemon juice and warm water to thin.) Transfer to a bowl to serve.

Planning a satay party

A satay menu is really versatile because it works equally well for just a few people as for a crowd. To keep things simple, make either the cucumber or the radish salad, serve just one of the dipping sauces, and choose either the grilled bread or white rice. For a more elaborate spread, make all the dishes. One pound of meat feeds three to four people, and each side dish is enough for about four, so double or triple the recipes accordingly.

TIMETABLE

Two days before:

- ❖ Make the marinade.
- ❖ Make the peanut sauce.
- ❖ Make the coconut sauce.

The night before:

- ❖ Slice and marinate the meat.
- ❖ Make the sweet-sour sauce.

That afternoon:

- ❖ Chill all beverages.
- ❖ Soak the wooden skewers.
- ❖ Make the pineapple sauce.
- ❖ Skewer the meats; keep chilled.
- ❖ Slice fruit for dessert.

An hour before:

- ❖ Make the radish and cucumber salads; transfer to serving bowls.
- ❖ Bring all the sauces to room temperature; transfer to serving bowls.
- ❖ Bring the skewered meat to room temperature.
- ❖ Skewer the bread.
- ❖ Make rice, if serving.

As the party begins:

- ❖ Start grilling the meat and bread skewers.



Cucumber Salad

Yields 2 cups; serves four.

- 2 medium-small cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and thinly sliced (to yield 2 cups)**
- 2 medium shallots, thinly sliced (to yield ¼ cup)**
- 6 to 8 fresh bird chiles or 4 to 6 fresh serrano chiles, cored, seeded, and minced (more for a spicier relish)**
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt**
- Juice of 2 limes (to yield a scant ½ cup)**
- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro**
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped unsalted dry-roasted peanuts**

In a mixing bowl, combine all the ingredients except the peanuts. Toss gently and let sit for 15 minutes. Transfer to a serving bowl, shower with the chopped peanuts, and serve.

(More recipes follow)



Radish Salad

Yields about 2½ cups; serves four to six.

½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ cup granulated sugar
½ teaspoon cayenne
3 tablespoons red-wine vinegar
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 teaspoon sesame oil
2 cups halved radishes, lightly crushed with the flat side of a chef's knife

In a small mixing bowl, combine the salt, sugar, cayenne, vinegar, soy sauce, and sesame oil. Stir to combine. Add the radishes; toss lightly. Cover and let sit for at least 15 minutes, or refrigerate for 1 hour before serving. (Don't make the salad any more than an hour ahead or the red radish skins will start to get blotchy and fade.)



Grilled French Bread Cubes

Serves four.

Grilled bread may seem unusual, but it's the traditional accompaniment to satay. It provides lovely textural contrast, and it's really simple. You can serve white rice instead, if you like.

1 loaf French bread
12 wooden skewers, soaked in water for 30 minutes and dried

Slice off the crust from the bread and slice the bread into 1-inch cubes. Thread 3 to 4 bread cubes on each skewer. Toast the bread on the grill for a couple of seconds before flipping and turning until the surface is slightly charred. Transfer to a plate and serve.



Sweet-Sour Sauce

Yields about ½ cup sauce; serves four.

1 teaspoon kosher salt
¼ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup distilled vinegar
2 tablespoons fish sauce
4 fresh bird chiles, cored, seeded or unseeded (according to your heat preference), and minced
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger

In a small saucepan, combine the salt, sugar, vinegar, and fish sauce. Cook over low heat until the sauce begins to bubble and thicken, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and cool slightly. Add the chiles. Just before serving, add the ginger.

Pineapple Dipping Sauce

Yields about 1½ cups; serves four.

1 cup finely chopped fresh pineapple or 1 can (8 ounces) crushed pineapple with juice
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
Juice of 1 lime (to yield a scant ¼ cup)
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
4 fresh bird or serrano chiles, cored, seeded, and minced
1 shallot, slivered

In a serving bowl, combine all the ingredients. Let sit for at least 15 minutes before serving.

Simple grilled fruit for dessert

Bananas, mangos, and pineapples are delicious grilled, and you can grill the fruit while the coals are dying down. To feed six, use two large firm but ripe bananas, two large ripe mangos, and one small ripe pineapple.

Heat a grill to medium. Halve the bananas lengthwise and slice and peel the mangos. Peel and core the pineapple; slice it into rings or cut it into chunks to thread onto skewers. Grill the fruit just enough to soften it, about 2 minutes per side. Drizzle with the coconut sauce at right and serve.



Coconut Sauce

Yields about 1 cup sauce; serves four to six.

The sauce can easily be made a day ahead. Unsweetened coconut cream can be hard to find, so I'm calling for spooning off the creamy top part of a can of coconut milk. Just take care not to shake the can before you open it.

1 can (13½ ounces) coconut milk
¼ cup granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Gently open the coconut milk and transfer the creamy top half into a measuring cup; you should have 1 cup. If you don't, add enough of the clear juice from the bottom of the can to equal 1 cup. (Discard the remaining juice or save it for another use.)

In a small saucepan, combine the coconut cream, sugar, and salt. Heat over low to medium until the sugar and salt dissolve; don't let it boil or the coconut cream will curdle. Simmer to thicken, stirring frequently, about 10 minutes. Chill the sauce (it will thicken further as it cools) and let it come to room temperature before serving.

Su-Mei Yu's latest book is Asian Grilling, just out from Harper Collins. ♦

A Fresh Herb Crust for Pork, Beef, or Lamb

A coating of fresh herbs gives thin cuts like pork chops toasty herb flavor

BY JERRY TRAUNFELD

When I became the chef at The Herbfarm Restaurant in 1990, I inherited an unusually simple herb crusting technique for meat from the restaurant's co-owner and founding chef, Ron Zimmerman. Most herb crusting recipes I'd seen involved coating the meat with mustard or combining fresh herbs with breadcrumbs, but Ron's method for rack of lamb was one step easier. He chopped up some parsley, rosemary, and sage and rolled the meat right in the herbs, and then he seared the meat in olive oil and roasted it to a juicy medium rare. The result was the best lamb I'd ever eaten—the herbs turned into a deep brown crust with a mouthwatering toasty flavor, and the tender meat picked up the pure, fresh herb flavor. Twelve years later, I still cook whole rack of lamb this way, but I've also adapted the technique for thin, tender cuts of meat so all the cooking can take place on the stovetop. The method is utterly simple and quick, and it's a great way to use the fragrant sprigs from your backyard herb garden.

Choose thin, individual cuts of meat

My basic method is most effective on thin cuts, such as chops, cutlets, and medallions. These have lots of surface area in proportion to their weight so the herb crust makes a big contribution of flavor to each bite. And because these cuts cook quickly, the meat is usually done by the time the herbs are browned.

Tender and lean cuts are top choices, including pork loin chops, lamb rib chops, beef tenderloin steaks or medallions, and boneless,



A trio of herbs. Chopped parsley is the foundation, and rosemary and thyme are the piny accents on these beef tenderloin steaks.



To wash a bunch of parsley (or any leafy tender herb), hold the stems and dunk the bunch repeatedly in a bowl of cold water, letting the grit settle. Lift it out and shake dry over the sink. Pat off excess moisture with paper towels.

Cut off the leaves by holding the bunch of herbs and angling the blade of a sharp chef's knife almost parallel with the stems. Shave off the leaves with short, downward swipes where the leaves meet the stems.



Chop with a rocking motion: Choke up on the knife handle and lay the fingers of your other hand straight over the tip. Chop up and down a dozen or so times, using your fingers to anchor the tip so the knife pivots in an arc. (See this in action: go to www.finecooking.com and click on "online extras.")



Gather the herbs back into a pile with the side of the knife. Keep doing the "rock-chop" until the herbs are chopped medium fine. A sharp knife will chop the herbs cleanly; a dull one will only bruise them.



Herb-crusted meats begin with washing, drying, and chopping fresh herbs

skinless chicken or turkey breast. You can also use these herb crusts for firm, meaty fish, such as thick tuna steaks, sea bass, monkfish, or swordfish.

Choosing the right herbs

When selecting herbs for coating meat, pick those that can hold onto their flavor in the intense heat of a sauté pan. Robust herbs like rosemary, sage, and thyme have strong flavors that become mellow and toasty when browned in olive oil. These types of hardy-leaved herbs make excellent additions to an herb crust.

Some soft-leaved herbs are good as well. Mint, oregano, and marjoram, for example, pack enough flavor to survive the searing heat. But very tender herbs like basil, cilantro, chervil, and dill won't hold up.

Parsley is essential. If you made the crust solely with robust herbs like rosemary and sage, their resinous quality would overwhelm the meat. I think of parsley as the breadcrumb of the herb world. It adds volume to the herb crust, it quiets the resinous aspect of

other herbs, and it contributes a savory fresh green flavor of its own. I generally use about twice as much parsley as I do all the other herbs combined (so if I'm using $\frac{1}{4}$ cup combined rosemary and thyme, I'll bulk it up with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup parsley). I prefer flat-leaf parsley because it has a finer texture and is easier to chop, but curly parsley is also fine.

A wisp of smoke means it's time to start cooking

There are two keys to cooking herb-crusted meats on the stovetop. The first is to use a little more olive oil than you might think, enough to generously coat the bottom of the pan. Don't cut back; it's crucial to creating a firm and nutty-tasting crust. Second, let the oil heat up. If it isn't very hot, the herbs will stick to the pan instead of the meat (although some of the herbs will fall off the meat and into the pan no matter what you do).

Be ready to go when you see the first wisp of smoke rising from the oil. You'll need tongs to carefully pick up a piece of meat and gently lower it into the pan, front to

back, to avoid splattering the oil. (Searing the herbs and meat can produce some smoke, so turn on the kitchen exhaust fan.) The meat needs to cook for 2 to 3 minutes without being moved; you'll know it's ready to be turned when most of the herb coating is deep brown. Thicker cuts of meat might need more cooking after both sides are brown, in which case you can turn the heat to low and cover the pan.

Beef Tenderloin Medallions with a Rosemary & Thyme Crust

Serves four.

If your market only has thicker steaks, buy four and ask the butcher to slice them in half horizontally to get eight $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-thick medallions, or do it yourself at home.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup loosely packed medium-finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 tablespoons medium-finely chopped fresh rosemary
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons lightly chopped fresh thyme
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons kosher salt
Coarsely ground black pepper



Mix in the other seasonings and coat the meat. The goal is a uniform but thin crust; you should still be able to see the meat through the herbs. Lightly press the meat into the herb mixture to coat one side. Turn it over and gently press to coat the other side. Put the meat on a platter and coat the remaining pieces.

8 beef tenderloin medallions (2¼ pounds total), ¾ inch thick
¼ cup olive oil; more as needed

Using your fingers, thoroughly mix the parsley, rosemary, thyme, salt, and several grinds of pepper in a shallow baking dish or pie pan. Gently flatten the medallions between your hands to about ½ inch thick. Coat the medallions with the herb mixture as shown in the photo above.

Heat the olive oil in a large (12-inch) skillet over high heat. When the first wisp of smoke rises from the oil, use tongs to set four medallions in the pan in a single layer. Cook until the herbs on the bottom turn very deep brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Turn the medallions over and cook the other side to the same deep brown, about 2 minutes; this should give you medium-rare medallions. Scrape out any stuck-on bits, add a bit more oil to the pan, let it get hot, and cook the other four medallions. To test for doneness, cut a small slit into a medallion and peek inside; remember that the meat continues to cook as it rests. Transfer the medallions to a warm platter and let them rest in a warm place, such as the back of the stove, for 5 minutes before serving.



Pork Loin Chops with a Sage & Fennel Crust

Serves four.

Letting the meat "cure" overnight while coated with a salted herb crust makes the pork juicy.

3 tablespoons loosely packed medium-finely chopped fresh sage
1 teaspoon freshly ground fennel seeds
Grated zest of ½ lemon
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Heaping ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
6 tablespoons loosely packed medium-finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
4 boneless pork loin chops (about 1 pound total), ½ inch thick
¼ cup olive oil

Using your fingers, thoroughly mix the sage, fennel seeds, lemon zest, salt, and pepper in a shallow baking dish or pie pan. Mix in the parsley. Coat the chops with the herbs as shown in the photo at top left. Stack the chops and wrap them tightly in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours.

Heat the olive oil in a large (12-inch) skillet set over medium-high heat. When the first wisp of smoke rises from the oil, use tongs to carefully set the chops in the pan in a single layer. (If you need to do this in batches, add more oil to the pan for the second batch and let it get hot.) Cook until the herbs on the bottom turn very deep brown, about 3 minutes. Turn the chops over and cook until the other side is deep brown and the pork is cooked through, about 3 minutes. To test for doneness, press with your finger; the meat should be firm. Or cut into a chop; the meat should be very light rosy pink and still juicy; it continues to cook slightly as it rests. Transfer the chops to a warm platter and let them rest in a warm place for 5 minutes before serving.



Grilled Lamb Rib Chops with a Rosemary & Sage Crust

Serves four.

Grilling suits these chops perfectly, but they can also be cooked in a skillet on the stovetop. I also like this herb combination with inexpensive thin lamb shoulder chops, cut about ½ inch thick.

½ cup loosely packed medium-finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
3 tablespoons loosely packed medium-finely chopped fresh rosemary
1½ tablespoons loosely packed medium-finely chopped fresh sage
1 teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
12 bone-in lamb rib chops, ½ inch thick
Olive oil for coating the grill rack

Using your fingers, thoroughly mix the parsley, rosemary, sage, salt, and pepper in a shallow baking dish or pie pan. Coat the chops with the herbs as shown in the photo at top left. You can grill the chops right away or cover them tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 4 hours.

When you're ready to cook the chops, prepare a charcoal grill so it's medium hot, or heat a gas grill to medium high. Scrub the grate clean with a brush and oil it lightly. Use tongs to carefully set the chops on the grill. Cook until the herbs are deep brown but not charred and the meat is medium rare, 3 to 5 minutes per side. If there are flare-ups, move the chops to another part of the grill. To test for doneness, bend or cut into the chops next to the bone and check for medium-rare meat. Transfer to a warm platter and let rest in a warm place for 5 minutes before serving.

Jerry Traunfeld is the chef at The Herbfarm Restaurant in Woodinville, Washington. ♦

Raspberries

Simple and Spectacular

A range of desserts show off this berry's seductive perfume and juicy flavors

BY MICHELLE POLZINE

As a vintage-clothing and flea-market hound, I tend to like things gussied up. Sometimes to excess, probably. But raspberries are a big exception; to me, they're the gems of summer, and, like the most fabulous gems, they're pretty darn fantastic as is, needing very little dolling up to shine and sparkle. Recently, I was lucky enough to have a load of raspberries on my hands, and I went wild, creating recipes that range from super simple (raspberry purée, raspberry truffles, and raspberry-lemonade ice) to fairly simple (a chocolate-raspberry tart) to a bit fancy (a raspberry trifle—as I said, I can't resist gussying things up). But in each case, I did little if anything to alter the berries themselves, preferring instead to avoid cooking them and to pair them with flavors that enhance them.

Wait for local berries

Raspberries are available just about year-round, but I prefer to take advantage of those few weeks in summer when local raspberries call my name at the farmers' market.

Look for plump, fragrant berries.

In addition to red raspberries, you'll





find black, golden, and even pink raspberries at farmers' markets and specialty stores. The differences in flavor are subtle, but a mix is beautiful. When shopping, examine the box to check for freshness. If you see juice stains, it's probably a sign of moldy berries inside. Hold the closed raspberry container upside down. If berries stick to the bottom inside liner, they're crushed and it's likely some are moldy, so choose another box. Even in the height of summer, berries are a bit of an investment, so befriend your produce merchant and request a taste before you buy. If a few berries get crushed on the way home from the market, don't worry. They'll still taste great, and with the exception of the topping for the trifle and the chocolate tart, all of these recipes are suitable for less-than-ideal-looking berries.

If you must wash berries, do it gently

Despite that big explosion of berry flavor, raspberries are extremely fragile. Washing berries isn't ideal, but if you want to be safe, wash them right before using them. Fill a bowl with cold water, gently add the berries, and then lift them out with your hands—again, gently. Let the berries dry in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with paper towels.

Taste your berries before starting the recipe. I've given reliable amounts of sugar in the recipes here, but as with any other fruit dessert, if the berries are very sweet, you may want to reduce the sugar a little. On the other hand, if they seem a bit lackluster, a bit more sugar, some lemon juice, and even a pinch of salt will do wonders to amp up flavor.

Local raspberries appear for such a brief time in summer that I urge you to pounce while you can and indulge. If you have more berries than you know what to do with, freeze them in a single layer and then transfer them to zip-top bags and stash them in the freezer. And there they'll be, waiting to wow you months after berry season has gone.



A gingersnap crust needs no rolling. Simply press it into the tart pan with the bottom of a measuring cup or a jar.

Chocolate-Raspberry Tart with a Gingersnap Crust

Yields one 9½-inch tart; serves eight to ten.

This tart can be made up to a day ahead. The chocolate filling is a variation on the chocolate-raspberry ganache for the truffles at right. For the crust, you'll need nothing fancier than a bag of store-bought gingersnaps.

Vegetable oil for the pan
About 40 gingersnap wafers (to yield 1½ cups finely ground)
4 tablespoons melted unsalted butter
3½ cups fresh raspberries
8 ounces semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
1¼ cups heavy cream
Small pinch salt

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F. Oil the sides and bottom of a 9½-inch fluted tart pan with a removable bottom. In a food processor, grind the gingersnaps until they're the texture of sand. Transfer to a bowl, add the melted butter, and work it in by squishing the mixture

together with your hands. Press into the sides and bottom of the oiled tart pan. Set the pan on a baking sheet and refrigerate for 20 minutes to firm. Bake the tart crust on the baking sheet until fragrant, about 15 minutes, checking and rotating if needed to make sure the crust doesn't get too dark. Set on a rack to cool.

Meanwhile, pass 1 cup of the berries through a food mill fitted with a fine disk or force them through a fine sieve, mashing with a wooden spoon, into a medium bowl. You'll have about ½ cup purée; set it aside and discard the contents of the strainer. Put the chopped chocolate in a medium bowl. Heat the cream just until boiling. Pour the hot cream over the chopped chocolate; whisk to blend. Stir in the raspberry purée and the salt. Pour the mixture (called a ganache) into the cooled tart shell. Refrigerate until the ganache is fairly firm, about 1 hour. Arrange the remaining raspberries on top of the ganache; they should completely cover the surface. Chill until the ganache is completely firm, about 30 minutes, and serve.



These berries won't sink into the chocolate filling. The ganache is chilled slightly before the raspberries go on.



More ways with raspberry sauce

There are loads of ways to use raspberry sauce. Plus, it looks great drizzled or spooned onto a dessert plate.

Drizzle it over:

- ❖ chocolate or vanilla ice cream
- ❖ mango or peach slices
- ❖ pineapple chunks
- ❖ pound cake

Serve it alongside:

- ❖ brownies
- ❖ chocolate cake or torte
- ❖ crème caramel

Add it to:

- ❖ chocolate sauce
- ❖ lemonade
- ❖ smoothies

Fresh Raspberry Sauce

Yields about 1 cup.

If you're craving this sauce in the off season, you can make it with frozen berries.

2 cups fresh raspberries

2 tablespoons granulated sugar, or to taste

Pinch salt

A few drops fresh lemon juice, or to taste

Pass the berries through a food mill fitted with a fine disk or force them through a fine sieve, mashing with a wooden spoon. Discard the seeds. Whisk the sugar and salt into the purée; add the lemon juice. Taste and add more sugar or lemon juice if needed and refrigerate the sauce, which, if well sealed, will keep for a couple of weeks.

Other flavors that raspberries love

The recipes here pair raspberries with lemon, chocolate, and ginger. Here are a few other flavors and ingredients that raspberries love.

- ❖ blackberries, blueberries, and strawberries
- ❖ coconut
- ❖ fresh figs
- ❖ fresh mint
- ❖ lemon thyme
- ❖ lemon verbena
- ❖ orange flower water
- ❖ rose geranium
- ❖ rose water
- ❖ stone fruit of all sorts



Chocolate-Raspberry Truffles

Yields about sixty 1-inch truffles.

Use the best-quality chocolate you can find. When warmed, the chocolate mixture doubles as a killer sauce for ice cream.

1 cup fresh raspberries

1 pound semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped

1½ cups heavy cream

Small pinch salt

1 cup unsweetened Dutch-processed cocoa



A food mill makes quick work of raspberry purée, mashing and straining in one sweep.

Pass the berries through a food mill fitted with a fine disk or force them through a fine sieve, mashing with a wooden spoon, into a medium bowl. You'll have about ½ cup purée; set it aside and discard the contents of the strainer. Put the chopped chocolate in a medium bowl. In a small saucepan, heat the cream just until boiling. Pour the hot cream over the chopped chocolate; whisk to blend. Stir in the raspberry purée and the salt. Refrigerate the mixture until completely chilled, about 1 hour. Pour the cocoa powder onto a plate. With a melon baller or spoon, scoop the chocolate and shape it into 1-inch balls. If the truffles are very soft, put them on a baking sheet and refrigerate briefly to firm. Roll the shaped truffles in the cocoa, coating them thoroughly. If sealed and refrigerated, they'll keep for about a week. *(More recipes follow)*

**It's easy
to layer
a luscious,
textured
trifle**



Moisten the split cake layers well with raspberry syrup. Transfer one layer to a bottomless cake ring.



Next, spread on one-third of the lemon mousse.

Raspberry Lemon Mousse Trifle

Serves eight.

Use a 9-inch nonaluminum springform ring, a quiche pan that's about 3 inches tall, or a bottomless cake ring (also called a vacherin) to assemble the trifle. Or use large wineglasses to make individual trifles.

FOR THE SPONGE CAKE:

Butter for the pan

2½ ounces (½ cup plus 3 tablespoons) cake flour

1¼ ounces (5 tablespoons) cornstarch

½ cup granulated sugar

4 large eggs, at room temperature

1 egg yolk

½ teaspoon fresh lemon juice

¼ teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons melted unsalted butter

FOR THE LEMON MOUSSE:

6 large egg yolks

¾ cup granulated sugar

½ cup fresh lemon juice

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 tablespoons finely grated lemon zest

Generous pinch salt

8 ounces mascarpone cheese

1½ cups heavy cream, whipped to medium-firm peaks

FOR THE SOAKING LIQUID AND ASSEMBLY:

¾ cup granulated sugar

½ cup water

5½ cups fresh raspberries

¼ cup plus 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

Bake the sponge cake: Position a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 9-inch cake pan and line the bottom with parchment. Sift together the flour, cornstarch, and 2 tablespoons of the sugar. Crack the eggs and yolk into the bowl of an electric mixer. Whip on medium speed, adding the lemon juice, salt, and the remaining 6 tablespoons sugar. Increase the speed to high and whip until the eggs are very fluffy, at least tripled in volume, and form soft peaks, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove the bowl from the mixer. Sift the flour mixture over the eggs in three separate additions, gently incorporating with a hand whisk each time. Put the melted butter in a small bowl, add a dollop of the batter, and stir gently. Add this to the mixing bowl, folding gently with a spatula to incorporate. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan. Bake until dark golden and springy when touched, about 40 minutes. Cool the cake in the pan on a rack.

Make the lemon mousse: In a heavy-duty, nonreactive saucepan, combine the egg yolks, sugar, lemon juice, and butter. Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly until the butter melts. Reduce the heat to medium low and stir constantly with a wooden spoon until the mixture thickly coats the back of the spoon, about 5 minutes. Strain into a clean bowl and stir in the zest and salt. Refrigerate, covered, until completely chilled. The mixture will be very thick. In a medium bowl, mash the mascarpone with a rubber spatula. Add a little of the chilled lemon curd and continue mashing until the mixture is lump-free. Stir in the rest of the lemon curd, and then fold in the whipped cream. (If the mousse is too stiff, add a touch of unwhipped heavy cream to loosen it.) Refrigerate until it's time to assemble the trifle.

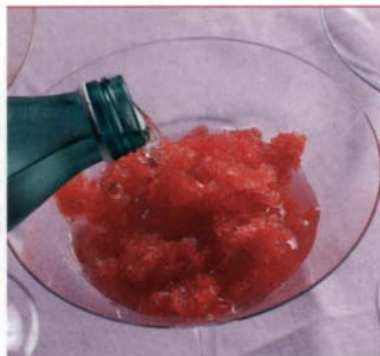
Mix the soaking liquid: In a small saucepan, combine the sugar and water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture boils and the sugar has completely dissolved. Set aside. Pass 1 cup of the berries through a food mill fitted with a fine disk or force them through a fine sieve, mashing with a wooden spoon, into a



Arrange a third of the berries on top of the mousse, and repeat the layers twice. The first two layers are a good place for any less-than-perfect berries.

medium bowl. Discard the contents of the strainer and stir the purée (you should have about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) into the sugar syrup. Add the lemon juice and set aside until it's time to assemble the trifle.

Assemble the trifle: With a serrated knife, slice the cake into three equal round layers. (If you're using wineglasses, cut the layers into squares the approximate size of the glasses.) Set a 9-inch-wide springform ring or cake ring that's about 3 inches tall onto a flat serving plate. Put one cake layer on the bottom. With a pastry brush, moisten the cake well with the soaking liquid (it should be well moistened but not sodden). Spread on one-third of the mousse and then arrange one-third of the remaining $4\frac{1}{2}$ cups berries over the mousse. Place the second cake layer on top, moisten it with more soaking liquid, and repeat with another third of the mousse and another third of the berries. Do a third layering, ending with the remaining berries arranged on top. Refrigerate the trifle until the mousse has firmed, at least 3 hours and no longer than a day. Remove the cake form or ring just before serving and cut the trifle into slices like a cake.



A spritz of sparkling water makes this granité bubble refreshingly. Scraping with a spoon is the easiest way to serve it.

Raspberries at their simplest

Here are more great ways to serve raspberries plain and simple.

Top them with:

- ♦ crème fraîche
- ♦ custard sauce
- ♦ heavy cream
- ♦ sour cream and brown sugar

Use them to top:

- ♦ fresh figs
- ♦ fresh ricotta cheese
- ♦ Greek yogurt
- ♦ ice cream
- ♦ a lemon curd tart
- ♦ sweetened polenta
- ♦ your morning cereal

Raspberry-Lemon Granité

Yields 4 cups; serves eight.

I like this granité because it's not too sweet, but if you want it sweeter, increase the sugar by a couple of tablespoons.

2 cups water

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar

1 cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ pint) fresh raspberries

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh lemon juice

Chilled sparkling water for spritzing

In a small saucepan, combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the water and all the sugar. Cook over high heat, stirring, until the sugar is completely dissolved. Set aside. Pass the berries through a food mill fitted with a fine disk or force them through a fine sieve, mashing with a wooden spoon, into a medium bowl. You should have about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup purée; set it aside and discard the contents of the strainer. Whisk in the sugar syrup, the lemon juice, and the remaining $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups water. Pour into a baking pan and freeze until solid. To serve, scrape the granité with a spoon and portion it into martini glasses. Pour a dash of sparkling water on each portion and serve.

Michelle Polzine is a pastry chef who lives in San Francisco. ♦

In this edition: how to cut a whole chicken into ten pieces...the right way to fold egg whites...fresh and refreshing lemongrass...chopping and slicing garlic...saving heirloom tomato seeds...the best potatoes for salads...the results of our Dijon mustard tasting...and protecting the “non” in your nonstick pans.



When the mercury goes up, making pastry gets tricky

Summer heat makes it tough to deal with pastry dough—the butter or shortening melts and you end up with tough pie crust. If your kitchen isn’t air-conditioned, here are a few tips for keeping your pies tender and flaky.

Work in the cooler early-morning hours.

If you’re not a morning person, measure out your ingredients the night before so you don’t goof up before your coffee kicks in.

Chill ingredients well before mixing.

Measure out the flour and chill it together with the cut-up butter. These ingredients can be covered with plastic and kept in the refrigerator for up to two days.

Instead of cutting in butter, try grating it.

Freeze the butter and grate it with the food processor’s shredding disk or on a box grater. The shreds can simply be mixed into the flour: no need to cut them in. If you’re using shortening, shape it into a cylinder, wrap it in waxed paper, and freeze it overnight before shredding.

Chill a marble or granite work surface

by filling a roasting pan (or zip-top bags) with ice and setting it on the marble for

20 minutes or so. Dry the surface thoroughly before using it for pastry.

When rolling out dough, keep a baking sheet in the fridge or freezer. If the dough begins to soften, slide the cold sheet under the dough for a quick chill. Once the dough is on the sheet, it can also be covered with plastic and put in the refrigerator.

Chill your equipment: bowls, whisks, pastry blenders, rolling pins, etc. Using cold bowls and tools keeps ingredient temperatures balanced. Stainless-steel and marble rolling pins stay the coolest.

Keep a pitcher of ice water in the refrigerator for mixing into the dough and for refreshing yourself.

Handle the dough as little as possible. Your hands will quickly warm the dough, so use a bench scraper instead whenever you can.

at the market



Salad potatoes

The best potatoes to use in potato salads are those with a low- to medium-starch content—often called waxy or sometimes salad or boiling potatoes. Compared to starchy baking potatoes that fall apart and turn mealy when cooked, lower starch potatoes keep their shape and remain creamy with just the right amount of tooth to hold up in salads. They also tend to have a more distinct flavor than baking potatoes.

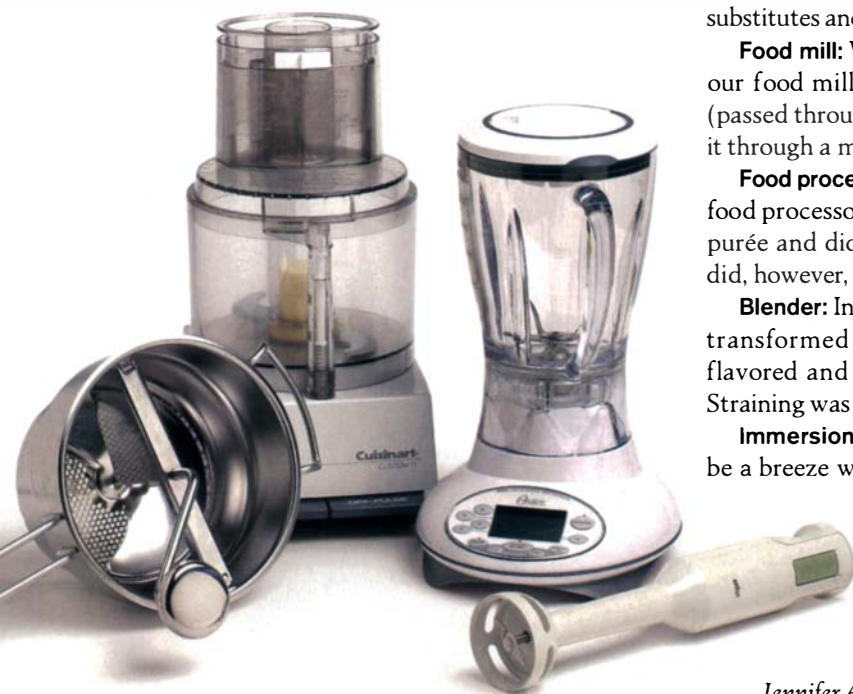
The most common low-starch potatoes are the red-skinned varieties, sometimes labeled Red Bliss. Other low-starch choices include white varieties like California long whites and Maine or Kennebec potatoes. Medium-starch options include Yukon Golds and Yellow Finns. Many specialty potatoes labeled as fingerlings, heirlooms, or “gourmet” potatoes have a low- to medium-starch content, and some come in hues of rose, pink, gold, and even purple, so your salad will be pretty as well as delicious.

—M. S.

—Abigail Johnson Dodge and Molly Stevens, contributing editors

Photo at far left: Sloan Howard

Puréeing machines go head to head



While testing recipes for the soup recipes on pp. 52-53, we wondered, what's a cook to do if he or she lacks a blender, the author's recommended puréeing tool? So we rounded up the most likely substitutes and pitted them against a blender in a purée-off.

Food mill: We couldn't get the corn soup to pass through our food mill at all, and the zucchini and eggplant purées (passed through the finest disk) were too coarse to then make it through a mesh strainer to eliminate any vegetable fibers.

Food processor: Despite a slightly longer running time, the food processor purée was noticeably coarser than the blender purée and didn't taste quite as flavorful. It did, however, strain with a minimal effort.

Blender: In the shortest time, the blender transformed our soup base into a full-flavored and very smooth, creamy purée. Straining was practically effortless.

Immersion/stick blender: Clean-up may be a breeze with a stick blender, but it took the longest run time to make a purée that was weak in flavor and had a fairly coarse and uneven texture. Straining required more elbow grease.

—Jennifer Armentrout, test kitchen manager

BOTTOM LINE

If you don't have a blender, buy one: you'll find plenty of uses for it. A food processor is an acceptable substitute for the puréed soups on pp. 52-53, but use a stick blender only as a last resort, and save the food mill for applesauce.

How to fold whipped egg whites for maximum lift

Soufflés owe their delicate, puffy texture to the air trapped in whipped egg whites. As the air heats in the oven, it expands, causing the soufflé to rise. The key to achieving the best rise lies in proper folding,

a technique for mixing the egg whites with the rest of the soufflé ingredients with a minimum loss of air. Folding starts with stirring about one-third of the whipped whites into the base ingredients. This step sacrifices some of the

air, but it lightens the base, making it easier to fold in the rest of the whites. If you're working with a large amount of whites, you may need to fold in the remaining whites in two or more batches. —J. A.



1. Gently whisk or stir in a small portion—about one-third—of the whipped egg whites into the base ingredients to lighten the mixture. Gently drop the remaining whites on top.



2. Position a rubber spatula near the edge of the bowl farthest from you and then cut the spatula straight down through the whites and the soufflé base to the bottom of the bowl.



3. Pull the spatula toward you along the bottom of the bowl and then up the side to drag some of the soufflé base to the top. Gently flip the base onto the whites as you give the bowl a small turn with your other hand.



4. Continue the circular motion of cutting down, dragging up, flipping, and turning until you no longer see streaks of egg white.

Got a favorite heirloom tomato? Save the seeds

favorite gadget

The tomato knife

Ever noticed how stubborn tomato skin can be? The solution: the tomato has its very own knife. It's usually about 5 inches long with sharp serrations for slicing through the skin without mashing the flesh. Some versions even have a forked tip to help you maneuver slices onto your sandwich or platter. A tomato knife also works well for small breads or rolls and other slick-skinned, soft-fleshed produce, like eggplant. Most major knife manufacturers offer tomato knives. We especially like the rock-and-roll look of LamsonSharp's synthetic blue mother-of-pearl handles. For details, see *Where to Buy It*, p. 80. —J. A.



If you taste an heirloom tomato this summer you love so much that you want to grow it next year, save the seeds. It's easy. You can simply spread the seeds on paper towels and let them dry, but you'll get better germination if you ferment them. Here's how. Cut a ripe tomato in half and squeeze all the seeds and juice into a plastic or glass jar. If there isn't much juice, add a bit of water. Set the uncovered jar in a warm place out of direct light for a few days, until a thickened, whitish layer of mold forms on top. Discard this layer, tip the seeds and liquid into a sieve, and rinse well. Spread the seeds on paper towels to dry thoroughly and then seal in airtight containers, labeled with the variety and date.

—Ruth Lively, contributor and former senior editor of *Kitchen Gardener*

Don't let your nonstick pan go up in smoke

One of the fastest ways to ruin a nonstick surface is to overheat oil to the point that it smokes and leaves a hard, dark, difficult-to-clean film on the pan. Nonstick pans are especially vulnerable since we tend to use less oil in them, and less oil heats up faster. Plus, the dark surface makes it hard to see what's happening with the oil. To avoid carbonized oil build-up, use refined vegetable oils, which tolerate higher degrees of heat. Generally, canola, safflower, sunflower, soy, and corn oils won't begin to smoke until they reach 420°F. Olive oil has a lower smoke point of around 360° to 380°F. (Frying temperatures are typically around 325° to 375°F.)

—Maryellen Driscoll, editor at large

What we mean by...

The effect that garlic has on a dish greatly depends on how it's first prepared. Our recipes tend to call for garlic in five different forms, and we thought it might be helpful to show you what we mean when we say "minced," "chopped," etc. We advise you to resist the convenience of prechopped garlic. It doesn't taste nearly as good as fresh garlic. —J. A.

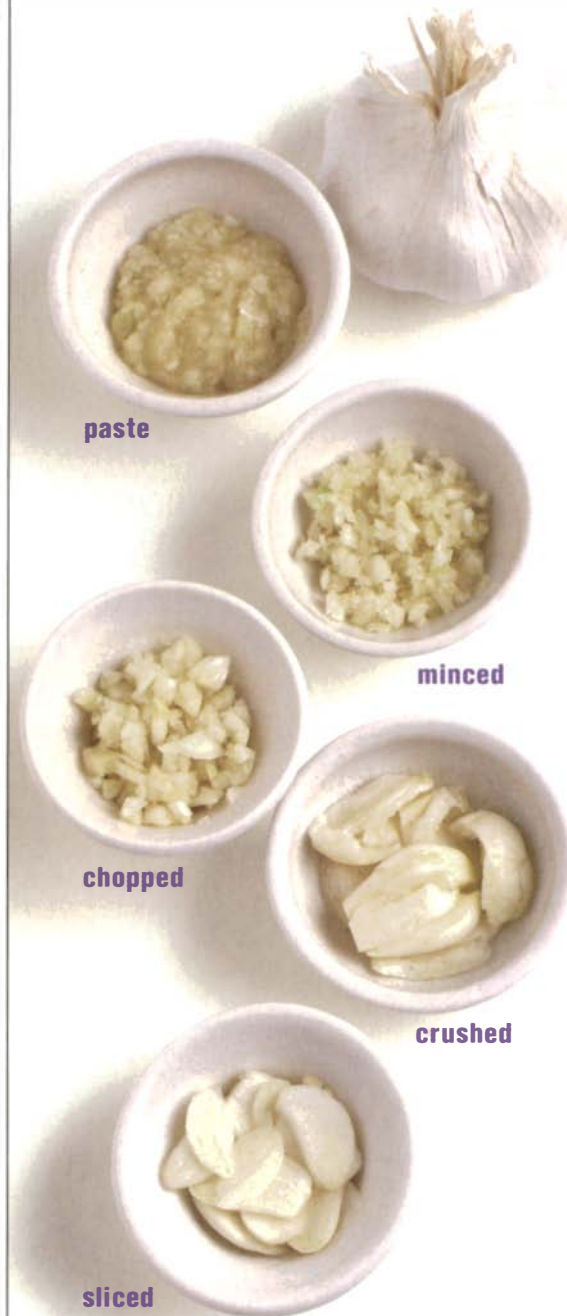
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minced

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knife skills

How to turn a whole chicken into ten even-size pieces

Packaged chicken parts from the market are often poorly trimmed, randomly sized, and more expensive pound for pound than a whole chicken. By cutting up a chicken yourself, you get a perfect balance of light and dark meat and more evenly sized pieces for grilling, roasting, or stewing. A sturdy chef's knife and a washable cutting surface are the only tools you need. As a bonus, the leftover chicken back is a great addition to the stockpot—you can freeze it until you're ready to make stock. —M. S.

White meat or dark? One chicken can be cut into four pieces each of white meat and dark meat, plus a pair of wings.



1. *Extend the wing and cut through the first joint, leaving the meatiest portion of the wing attached to the breast.*



2. *Hoist the chicken off the surface by the end of a drumstick to loosen the leg. Slice through the skin to expose the leg's interior.*



3. *Forcefully bend the leg away to expose the joint. Insert the knife point between the ball and socket to separate the joint.*



4. *Cut the leg away from the body as close to the backbone as possible. Repeat steps 2 through 4 with the other leg.*



5. *Follow the line of fat that divides the drumstick from the thigh to cut down through the joint that separates the two.*



6. *Starting at the tail end, cut through the ribs to free the backbone. Chop through the collarbone to completely cut off the back.*



7. *Flatten the breast with your hand and then cut down through the breastbone with some force to separate the two halves.*



8. *Divide each half breast in half again, cutting at an angle to make two even-size pieces.*



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ingredient

Lemongrass

The citrusy aroma of lemongrass perfumes the dishes of many Asian cuisines, including Thai, Indian, Indonesian, and Vietnamese. Its lemonlike fragrance stands up to prolonged cooking, making it an especially popular choice for soups and curries. It can either be infused into a liquid and removed before eating, or it can be minced and mixed right in. Lemongrass has a few sharp or woody parts that need to be carefully trimmed away before use; see the photos below.

How to buy and store: Some supermarkets sell lemongrass in their fresh herb or exotic produce section, but your best bet is to head to an Asian grocery where the lemongrass is likely to be fresher. Choose firm, greenish-white stalks that have reasonably fresh-looking tops. Lemongrass lasts a long time, so it's all right if the tops look a little dry, but they shouldn't be totally desiccated. Wrap extra stalks in plastic and store in the refrigerator for a few weeks or in the freezer for up to six months.

Lemongrass Lemonade

Yields about 4 cups.

The pinch of salt actually makes the drink's sweetness more pronounced.

- 1 cup granulated sugar**
- 2 stalks lemongrass, bruised lightly with the side of a knife and cut into ½-inch pieces**
- 3 cups water**
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice (from about 3 large lemons)**
- ½ cup fresh lime juice (from about 2 limes)**
- Pinch kosher salt**
- 2 cups ice**
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced**
- 2 stalks lemongrass, cut into 4 swizzle sticks (optional)**

In a small saucepan, combine the sugar, lemongrass pieces, and water, and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Lower the heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove the syrup from the heat; let it sit for about 1 hour. Strain it into a glass pitcher. Just before serving, add the lemon juice, lime juice, and salt. Stir well and add the ice. Serve in tall glasses with more ice, garnished with the lemon slices and the lemongrass swizzle sticks.

—Mai Pham,
Fine Cooking #22



1. Trim lemongrass by cutting off the spiky top and enough of the bottom so that you no longer see a woody core. Peel off a few of the outer layers until you're left with just the tender heart of the stalk.

2. For infusions, bruise the stalk by smashing it under the side of a cleaver or chef's knife. For easy removal from a pot of hot liquid, tie the whole stalk into a knot, or cut it into smaller lengths for straining out.

3. To mince lemongrass, slice the stalk thinly crosswise and then chop through the slices until they're minced.

—J. A.



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Dijon mustards

Dijon mustard is one of those ingredients that no refrigerator should be without. In addition to adding a tangy flavor kick to foods, it's an important emulsifying agent that helps vinaigrettes and other sauces stay together. Most supermarkets offer a bewildering array of "Dijons," mostly American made. So which to buy? To find out, we held a blind tasting of seven widely available brands, in

which the mustards were tasted side by side, both plain and with sausage. We rated them for their heat (think horseradish, not chile), flavor, consistency, aroma, and overall likability.

In France, there are federal standards for what constitutes Dijon mustard, but in the United States, there are none, so anything can have a "Dijon" label.

—M. D. & J. A.

Top pick



1. MAILLE

The only French mustard in the tasting, this Dijon is not for the faint of heart. Gutsy and bold, the pungent heat builds and braces, tickling its way up your nasal passages. The texture is smooth, almost buttery, the finish long, and the overall mustard flavor well rounded and complex. (7½ ounces, \$2.19)

TASTING RESULTS

Mustards shown in numerical order of preference

Good Choices



2. GREY POUPON

Evenly concentrated, with a slow-building heat that's pleasant, not sharp, but by no means faint. Smooth in texture but with a very small bit of graininess that tasters liked. (8 ounces, \$2.99)



3. FRENCH'S

This mustard's bracing heat is similar to Grey Poupon's but more up-front, disappearing quickly. Its flavor is pleasant, zippy, and balanced; its consistency is smooth. (12 ounces, \$2.69)



4. SILVER SPRING

For a clear mustard flavor with straightforward heat that doesn't linger, this is it. The flavor is balanced and pleasant but mild, the texture thick with a slight graininess. (9½ ounces, \$1.99)

Not Recommended



5. WESTBRAE NATURAL

This mustard was hardly reminiscent of Dijon. The heat was brief and wanting; the flavor was remarkably sweet with a sour finish; the texture was gritty. (8 ounces, \$2.39)



6. ROLAND

The yawner of the bunch, the heat was dull and fleeting, the flavor muted. Partnered with sausage, it still didn't taste like much, including mustard. (7 ounces, \$2.59)



7. JACK DANIEL'S

Tasters had only negative comments for this sweet-smelling mustard. There was no heat, the flavor was described as perfumy, harsh, unbalanced, and medicinal. (9 ounces, \$2.59)

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Corn *p. 39*

For the corn soufflé puddings, you can buy both white Apilco gratin dishes (above) and Emile Henry Auberge ramekins at **Williams-Sonoma** (877-812-6235; www.williams-sonoma.com).

In Season *p. 16*

Seeds for most of Ruth Lively's favorite tomatoes are available from **John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds** (860-567-6086; www.kitchengardenseeds.com) and **Shepherd's Garden Seeds** (www.shepherdseeds.com). Shepherd's Garden Seeds are also available in many retail gardening centers, including **White Flower Farm** (860-482-3638; www.whiteflowerfarm.com).

Messermeister tomato sharks are available for \$6 from **www.complementstothechef.com** (800-895-2433).

Enjoying Wine *p. 24*

For more information about **Fox Run Vineyards**, call 800-636-9786 or visit www.foxrunvineyards.com. The winery's tasting room is open daily, and tours are available.

Potato Salads *p. 44*

Thin metal skewers are a great tool for checking the doneness of potatoes. Try **A Cook's Wares** (www.cookswares.com; 800-915-9788), which sells a set of four 11-inch skewers for \$5.

For a high-quality apple-cider vinegar, try **Bragg** organic

apple-cider vinegar, 32 ounces for \$3.79 (800-446-1990; www.bragg.com).

Velvety Soups *p. 50*

To strain your soups, try sieves from **Sur La Table** (800-243-0852; www.surlatable.com), which sells 3- to 8-inch stainless-steel mesh sieves for \$5 to \$15.

Peppermint Brownies *p. 48*

Gourmet Catalog (877-445-0005; www.gourmetcatalog.com) carries kitchen parchment that's heat resistant up to 450°F.

Try making the brownies in an aluminum Magic Line baking pan (shown below). **Kitchen Conservatory** (866-862-2433; www.kitchenconservatory.com) sells a 9x13x2-inch pan for \$14.95.

If your supermarket doesn't carry peppermint extract, **The Spice House** (847-328-3711;

www.thespicehouse.com) sells a 4-ounce bottle for \$4.95.

Raspberry Desserts *p. 64*

To order a cake ring (also called a vacherin) try **Bridge Kitchenware** (www.bridgekitchenware.com; 212-688-4220). The rings range from 5½ to 11 inches and cost about \$20 each. For an inexpensive food mill, try the 1-quart plastic Moulinex; \$22.59 at **www.kitchenhaven.com** (800-824-0023). Cuisipro's stainless-steel food mills are also a good



option; a 9-inch one is \$89.95 at **Sur La Table** (800-243-0852; www.surlatable.com).

From Our Test Kitchen *p. 70*

Professional Cutlery Direct (800-859-6994; www.cutlery.com) sells LamsonSharp's blue-handled, 5-inch serrated tomato knife with forked tip for \$50.



FROM THE BACK COVER

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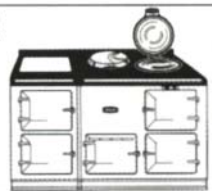
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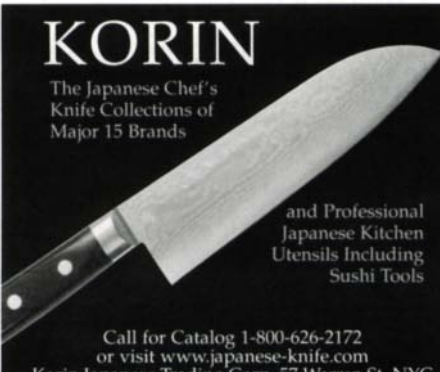
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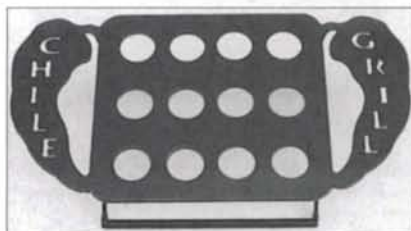
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Recipe (analysis per serving)	Calories		Protein (g)	Carb (g)	Fats (g)				Chol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Notes
	total	fromfat			total	sat	mono	poly				
In Season - p. 24												
Pasta w/Tomatoes, Gorgonzola & Basil	520	170	21	66	19	8	6	4	35	220	5	based on 6 servings
Grilled Chicken - p. 34												
Brined & Grilled Chicken	460	230	52	2	26	8	10	6	210	1,500	0	per tablespoon
Chipotle-Lime Rub	35	30	0	1	3.5	0.5	2.5	0.5	0	130	0	
Maple-Bourbon Glaze	50	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	210	0	
Cucumber-Grape Salsa	60	30	0	6	3.5	0.5	2.5	0.5	0	125	1	per tablespoon
Black Olive & Mint Vinaigrette	70	60	0	3	7	1	5	1	0	120	1	
Corn - p. 39												
Corn & Avocado Relish	230	140	4	23	15	2	10	2	0	140	4	based on 6 servings
Summer Succotash	150	70	4	18	8	2	4	1	5	170	4	
Corn Soufflé Puddings	260	180	7	17	20	11	6	1	160	390	2	
Bread Salad w/Corn, Tomatoes & Basil	380	220	6	37	25	4	17	2	0	390	4	
Potato Salads - p. 44												
Creamy Potato Salad w/Radishes	300	170	4	31	19	5	5	8	25	210	3	based on 8 servings
Warm Potato Salad w/Bacon	290	180	4	25	20	5	12	2	15	310	3	
Potato, Corn & Tomato Salad	330	190	4	34	21	4	10	7	0	930	4	
Brownies - p. 48												
Peppermint Brownies	220	130	3	23	15	9	4	1	50	30	2	per brownie
Velvety Soups - p. 50												
Puréed Summer Squash Soup w/Raita	165	100	5	15	11	6	3	1	25	1,120	3	with 2 tablespoons raita
Puréed Corn Soup w/Red Pepper Coulis	190	100	4	23	11	6	4	1	25	560	4	with 2 tablespoons coulis
Puréed Eggplant Soup w/Tomato Relish	230	160	5	15	18	3	12	2	0	420	4	with 3 tablespoons relish
Satay Menu - p. 56												
Beef, Pork, or Chicken Satay	330	200	26	9	22	4	7	9	70	380	1	based on 4 servings & mix of meat
Peanut Sauce	50	40	1	3	4.5	1	1.5	1.5	0	160	0	per tablespoon
Cucumber Salad	110	30	3	19	3.5	0.5	1.5	1	0	250	2	based on 6 servings
Radish Salad	50	10	1	10	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	470	1	
Grilled French Bread Cubes	230	20	7	44	2.5	0.5	1	0.5	0	520	3	
Sweet-Sour Sauce	80	5	1	17	0.5	0	0	0	0	1,180	1	based on 6 servings
Pineapple Dipping Sauce	50	0	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	125	1	
Coconut Sauce	160	120	1	10	14	12	1	0	0	90	1	
Herb Crusts - p. 61												
Beef Tenderloin Medallions w/Herb Crust	560	330	55	1	36	10	19	2	165	840	1	
Pork Loin Chops w/Sage & Fennel Crust	180	90	21	1	10	3	4	1	60	530	1	
Grilled Lamb Rib Chops w/Herb Crust	420	320	22	1	36	14	16	3	100	560	1	
Raspberry Desserts - p. 64												
Chocolate-Raspberry Tart	350	220	3	33	25	14	7	2	55	150	7	based on 10 servings
Fresh Raspberry Sauce	15	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	20	1	per tablespoon
Chocolate-Raspberry Truffles	60	40	1	6	4.5	3	1	0.5	10	5	2	per truffle
Raspberry Lemon Mousse Trifle	740	420	10	75	46	27	12	4	415	180	6	
Raspberry-Lemon Granite	60	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	
Quick & Delicious - p. 86B												
Savory Shrimp Fajitas	610	250	42	48	28	4	17	5	260	1,060	3	w/two tortillas (w/o sour cream)
Coffee Ice Cream w/Sour Cream Ganache	400	220	6	45	25	14	6	3	50	120	4	based on 6 servings
Broiled Swordfish w/Browned Butter Sauce	540	370	31	9	41	15	21	4	105	820	1	
Ginger Flank Steak	380	240	32	2	27	8	12	5	80	790	0	
Grilled Baby Eggplant & Plum Tomatoes	190	140	4	12	16	3	10	1	5	580	4	
Grilled Herbed Cornish Hens	720	510	48	1	57	13	30	9	280	460	0	based on six ¾-pound hens
Grilled Peaches w/Pound Cake	400	260	3	34	29	18	8	2	135	150	2	
Chicken w/Pesto & Marinated Tomatoes	460	290	35	7	33	7	20	3	85	660	2	

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at The Food Consulting Company of San Diego, California. When a recipe

gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in the calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific

quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used.



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READER SERVICE NO. 64

Intense, organic, smoke-dried tomatoes

BY AMY ALBERT

In the summer of 1994, Larry Butler and Carol Ann Sayle had a big problem. The owners of Boggy Creek Farm in Austin, Texas, were all set to harvest a big crop of organic tomatoes that were ripe and ready for market. But a storm blew through, and the couple was left with 1,200 pounds of damaged tomatoes. Because Austin is so humid, sun-drying wasn't an option. "We were heartbroken," they say.

But not for long. Larry and Carol Ann decided to try smoke-drying some of the damaged fruits. They built a slow fire, tended it for four days ("we didn't know then that tomatoes needed that much time"),

and wound up with something even more delicious than expected. The smoke-dried tomatoes were so good that the couple built a smokehouse on their other farm 80 miles north of Austin and started growing a special crop of roma tomatoes just for smoking. The smokehouse setup is simple and the fire is slow, so the tomatoes still take three to five days. Larry and Carol Ann say that oak is best for smoke-drying tomatoes, as opposed to mesquite, which is fine for grilling meat but imparts too strong a flavor for the slow-smoking that gives Boggy Creek tomatoes their remarkable depth and intensity.

—Amy Albert, senior editor ♦

Full of flavor, these smoke-dried tomatoes are great in quiches and savory tarts, pastas, salads, or on a slice of bread smeared with some goat cheese.





Savory Shrimp Fajitas

Serves four.

- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. packed light brown sugar
- ¼ tsp. crumbled dried oregano
- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed
- 1½ lb. large or jumbo shrimp, shelled, deveined, rinsed, and drained
- 1 large yellow onion, sliced through the stem end into thin wedges
- 2 medium fresh poblano chiles or bell peppers (4 to 6 oz. total), cored, seeded, and sliced into thin strips
- Warmed flour tortillas
- ¼ cup packed cilantro leaves
- 1 lime, cut in wedges
- Sour cream (optional)

In a small bowl, combine the cumin, garlic powder, pepper, salt, chili powder, brown sugar, and oregano. Put the ¼ cup oil in a medium bowl

and stir in all but 1 Tbs. of the spice mix. Add the garlic and shrimp; toss to coat.

Heat a 12-inch sauté pan over medium-high heat, and, when hot, add the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil. Add the sliced onion and sauté until they're softened and fragrant and starting to brown, about 4 minutes. Add the chiles or bell peppers and continue to sauté for 3 minutes. Add the remaining spice mixture and sauté until the onion and chiles are tender but not mushy, another 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl. Return the skillet to medium-high heat and add the shrimp. Cook, stirring frequently, until the shrimp are cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the sautéed vegetables; toss to combine and reheat. Transfer to a large serving platter. Serve with the warmed flour tortillas, cilantro, lime wedges for squeezing, and sour cream, if using.

BY LAUREN GROVEMAN



Coffee Ice Cream with Sour Cream Ganache & Toffee Chips

Serves four to six; yields about 1 cup sauce.

- 6 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped (or use chocolate chips)
- ⅓ cup sour cream, at cool room temperature
- ¼ tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 3 to 4 Tbs. water
- 1 quart coffee ice cream, slightly softened
- ¼ cup toffee chips (like Skor's English toffee bits)
- 2 Tbs. sliced almonds, toasted

Melt the chocolate in the top of a double boiler over barely simmering water, stirring frequently, until completely melted. (Or put the chocolate in a Pyrex bowl and heat in the microwave, uncovered, until melted and hot, about 1 minute on high.) Stir in the sour cream and vanilla. Continuing to stir, drizzle 3 to 4 Tbs. water into the sauce until it reaches a smooth, pourable consistency. Ladle the warm sauce on top of individual scoops of coffee ice cream and scatter with the toffee chips and almond slices.

tips

- ❖ The sauce can be made early in the day and reheated, either in the top of a double boiler or in the microwave.
- ❖ Chill any leftover sauce to make truffles. Use a small scoop to gather equal portions, round them slightly, and coat with equal parts unsweetened cocoa and confectioners' sugar.



Broiled Swordfish with Browned Butter–Red Pepper Sauce

Serves four.

- 4 swordfish steaks (2 lb. total), each about 1 inch thick, trimmed of any skin or dark flesh**
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 4 cloves garlic, minced, plus 6 large cloves, thickly sliced**
- Large pinch crushed red chile flakes**
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup minced fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 6 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 1 jar (12 oz.) roasted red peppers (about 2 large peppers), drained, dried, and sliced into thin strips**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup drained tiny capers, rinsed**
- Kosher salt**
- 1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar**

Heat the broiler with the rack as close to the heat source as possible, or heat a gas grill, covered, to high.

Arrange the fish steaks in a 9x13-inch non-reactive dish. Combine the oil, minced garlic, chile flakes, half of the parsley, the lemon juice, and a generous amount of pepper. Pour this mixture over the fish and use your fingers to coat the steaks with it.

Melt the butter in a 12-inch nonreactive skillet over medium heat and, when hot and bubbling, reduce the heat to medium low. Cook the butter gently, until the milk solids begin to turn light golden brown, about 2 minutes. Add the sliced garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until it turns golden, another 2 to 3 minutes; don't let the garlic or butter solids burn. Stir in the peppers and capers and then move the pan to a cold burner.

Sprinkle both sides of the fish with salt and put the fish steaks either on a cold broiler pan or on the hot grill.

Broil or grill the fish, turning once, until golden on both sides and cooked through but still succulent, about 10 minutes total. Transfer the fish to a warmed serving platter.

Reheat the sauce over medium heat until it's sizzling. Stir in the balsamic vinegar, the remaining parsley, and black pepper to taste. When hot, spoon this mixture on top of the fish and serve immediately.

tips

❖ Halibut steaks make a fine substitute for the swordfish.

❖ If using a broiler, cook the fish for 4 minutes on the first side and for 6 minutes after turning. If using a grill, reverse this.



Ginger Flank Steak

Serves six.

- 5 large cloves garlic, peeled**
- 1-inch chunk fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced**
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup thinly sliced scallions (white and tender light green parts)**
- 6 Tbs. peanut oil**
- $3\frac{1}{2}$ Tbs. soy sauce**
- $1\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. toasted sesame oil**
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste**
- 2 to 2½ lb. flank steak, trimmed of excess fat**
- Kosher salt**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbs. rice vinegar**

Heat the broiler to high with the rack as close to the heat source as possible, or heat a gas grill, covered, to high.

Put the garlic and ginger in a food processor and pulse until roughly chopped. Scrape the sides with a spatula, add the scallions, 3 Tbs. of the peanut oil, 2 Tbs. of the soy sauce, 1 tsp. of the sesame oil, and process until the mixture has a paste-like texture and the garlic and ginger are minced. Season well with pepper. Use the thin tip of a sharp knife to score both sides of the meat in a diagonal crosshatch pattern, going across the grain, making each slit about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep. Put the meat in a 9x13-inch nonreactive dish and season well with salt. Pour the marinade over the meat and rub it into the scored crevices.

Lay the meat either on a cold broiler pan or on the hot grill; broil or grill, turning once, until done to your liking, 8 to 10 minutes. Using tongs, transfer the meat to a warmed serving tray and let it rest for 5 minutes. In a small bowl, whisk together the remaining 3 Tbs. peanut oil, $1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbs. soy sauce, $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. sesame oil, and the rice vinegar. Slice the meat thinly on the diagonal and serve drizzled with the sauce.

tips

❖ You can marinate the steak a day ahead, refrigerated, but salt it just before cooking.

❖ This marinade is also delicious on skirt steaks, fresh skin-on salmon fillets, and skinless tuna steaks.



Grilled Baby Eggplant & Plum Tomatoes with Fresh Basil

Serves six to eight.

3 cloves garlic
2 tsp. kosher salt
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil; more for drizzling
2 generous tsp. minced fresh thyme
Freshly ground black pepper
6 to 8 baby eggplant (about 2 lb. total)
1¼ lb. ripe but firm plum tomatoes (about 6), halved through the stem end

8 large leaves basil, sliced into ¼-inch-thick ribbons
½ cup shaved parmesano reggiano (about 1 oz.)

Heat a gas grill to high, covered. Mince the garlic, sprinkle the salt over it, and scrape repeatedly with the flat side of a chef's knife until the garlic is mashed to a paste. Combine the garlic paste with the olive oil in a small bowl and add the thyme and a generous amount of pepper.

Trim the tops off each eggplant. Score the eggplant skin lengthwise with the tines of a fork. Cut each eggplant in half lengthwise and, using the sharp tip of a knife, score the cut sides in a crosshatch pattern, going halfway through the flesh, about ½ inch deep. Gently knock out any loose seeds from the tomatoes. Put

the eggplant and tomatoes in a bowl large enough to hold them. Toss with the garlic oil and sprinkle them with pepper.

With the lid down, grill the eggplant on both sides until tender and deeply colored but not burnt, about 10 minutes. Grill the tomatoes, cut sides down, just until they're nicely warmed and slightly charred, 2 to 5 minutes. Baste the vegetables while grilling with the remaining seasoned oil. Mix the eggplant and tomatoes on a serving platter and scatter the basil and cheese over them. Drizzle more oil on top or pass a bottle of extra-virgin olive oil at the table.

tips

❖ Instead of the gas grill, try using a grill pan over high heat on your stovetop.

❖ You'll get the longest strips of shaved Parmesan by running the blade of a sturdy vegetable peeler down the narrow sides of a wedge.



Grilled Herbed Cornish Hens

Serves four to six.

4 to 6 Cornish hens (¾ to 1¼ lb. each)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 large cloves garlic, flattened
2 generous Tbs. minced fresh thyme
1 generous Tbs. minced fresh rosemary
2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

Heat a gas grill to high. Using sharp kitchen scissors or poultry shears, remove the backbone of each hen by cutting on either side of it through the ribs. Turn the hens skin side up on the cutting board and press on the breastbone to flatten. Rinse each hen and pat dry. Spread the hens out flat on a large shallow baking sheet and sprinkle them on both sides with salt and pepper. Bend the wingtips under the breasts to protect them from burning.

Pour ¼ cup of the olive oil into a small bowl and add the garlic, a generous amount of pepper, and all but 1 tsp. each of the thyme and rosemary. Brush the hens liberally on both sides with the seasoned oil then add more pepper. Grill the hens skin side down, uncovered, until the skin develops nice grill marks (rotate the birds a quarter turn after first 3 minutes to create a crosshatch pattern). Turn the hens and sear them on the second side, again uncovered, about 4 minutes. Sprinkle the skin side with the reserved herbs and salt, close the lid, and reduce the heat to medium. Cook until the hens are tender throughout and the skin is crisp and very golden; an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the thigh should read 180°F, 10 to 15 minutes. Put the hens on a large serving platter. Whisk together the remaining ¼ cup oil and the lemon juice. Serve the hens drizzled with the lemon oil.

tip

❖ Try substituting lemon-flavored olive oil for the lemon juice and oil mixture at the end of the recipe.



Grilled Peaches with Pound Cake & Ginger Crème Fraîche

Serves six.

- 5 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 2 Tbs. granulated sugar**
- 1 cup (8 oz.) thick crème fraîche**
- Vegetable oil for greasing the grill**
- 3 ripe but firm peaches or nectarines, halved and pitted**
- 6 slices pound cake (1 inch thick)**
- 3 Tbs. chopped crystallized ginger**

caramelized, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer them to a platter and cover with foil. Grill the pound cake slices on both sides until nicely toasted, about 3 minutes total.

Cut each peach half into slices. Top each slice of pound cake with the sliced peaches. Spoon the crème fraîche over the peaches and scatter the crystallized ginger on top. Serve warm.

tips

❖ If crème fraîche is unavailable, use low-fat vanilla yogurt and omit the sugar.

❖ Choose a good-quality pound cake made with butter.

❖ Instead of a gas grill, try a large stovetop grill pan or a broiler.

Heat a gas grill to high, covered, and when it's hot, turn it to medium (this will get the grates sufficiently heated). Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium heat on the stove-top. Whisk the sugar into the crème fraîche until smooth.

Use a grill brush and then a lightly oiled rag secured on long tongs to clean the grill thoroughly. Brush the cut sides of each peach half and both sides of the pound cake slices liberally with the melted butter. Grill the peaches cut side down, uncovered, until lightly



Grilled Chicken with Pesto & Marinated Tomatoes

Serves four.

- 4 large skinless, boneless chicken breast halves**
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup homemade or store-bought basil pesto**
- 3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice**
- 4 ripe plum tomatoes, cored**
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more for brushing**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. red-wine vinegar**
- 1 clove garlic, minced**
- 1 generous tsp. Dijon mustard**
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh basil (or a mix of cilantro, basil, and flat-leaf parsley)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

Heat a gas grill to high. Butterfly the chicken breasts by making a horizontal cut through the center of the thickest long side of the breast. Cut almost but not entirely through each breast. Open the breasts like a book. Cover with plastic wrap and pound to flatten slightly to an even thickness. Combine the pesto with 2 Tbs. of the lemon juice and rub over the chicken in a nonreactive dish.

Cut each tomato in half. Gently remove the seeds with your fingers, coarsely chop the flesh, and put it in a bowl. In a small bowl, combine the oil, vinegar, garlic, mustard, basil, remaining 1 Tbs. lemon juice, 1 tsp. salt, and a generous amount of pepper. Pour this over the tomatoes and combine well.

Remove the chicken from the pesto, shaking to remove excess marinade, and sprinkle lightly with salt. Grill, turning once, until golden on both sides and cooked through, 4 to 6 minutes total. Transfer the chicken to a platter and serve hot or at room temperature. At the table, spoon the tomatoes over the chicken.

tip

❖ Use the tomatoes as a colorful topping for hot slices of garlic toast. Or, toss them with cooked pasta along with olives, chick-peas, and roasted red peppers.